

# FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

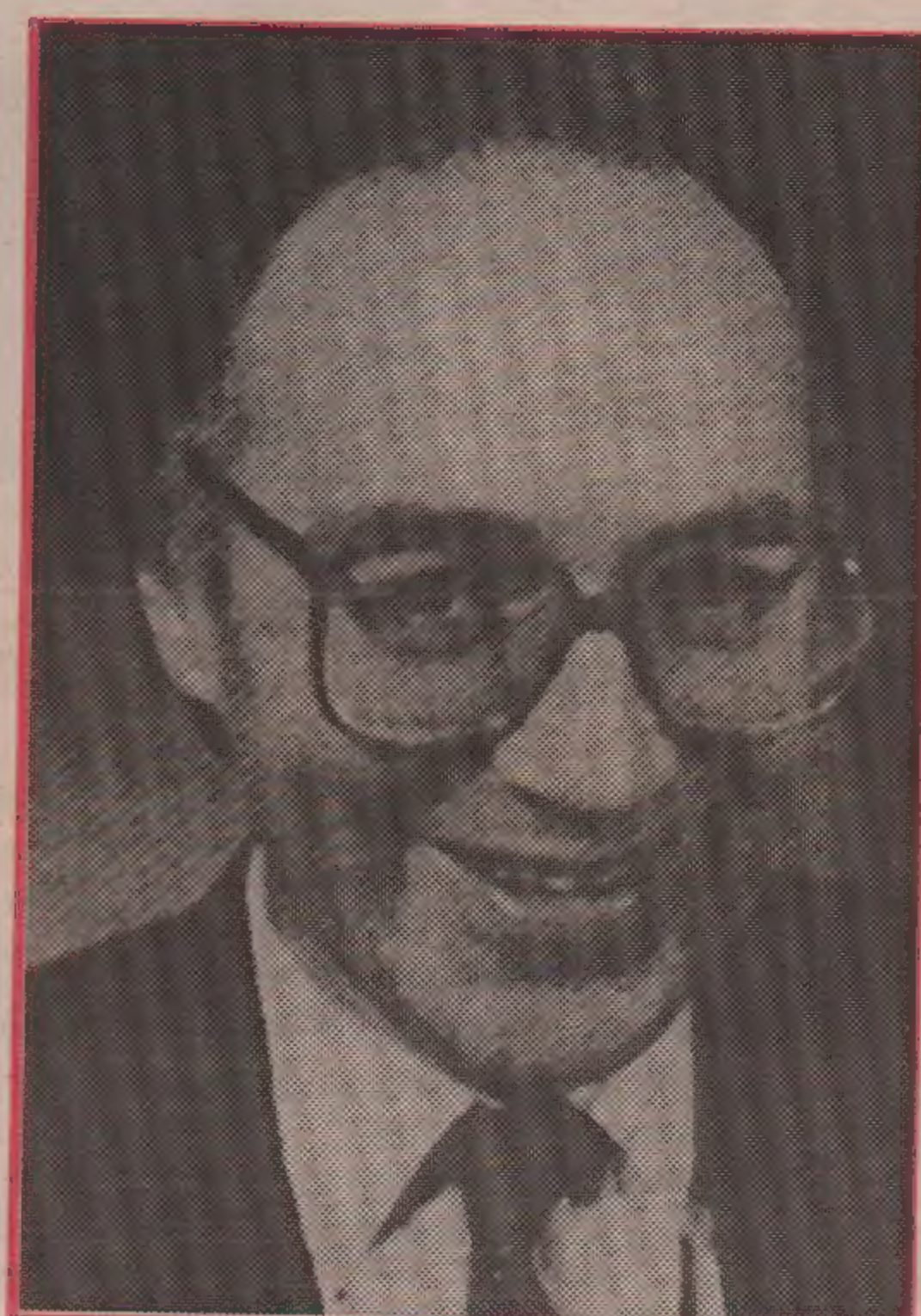
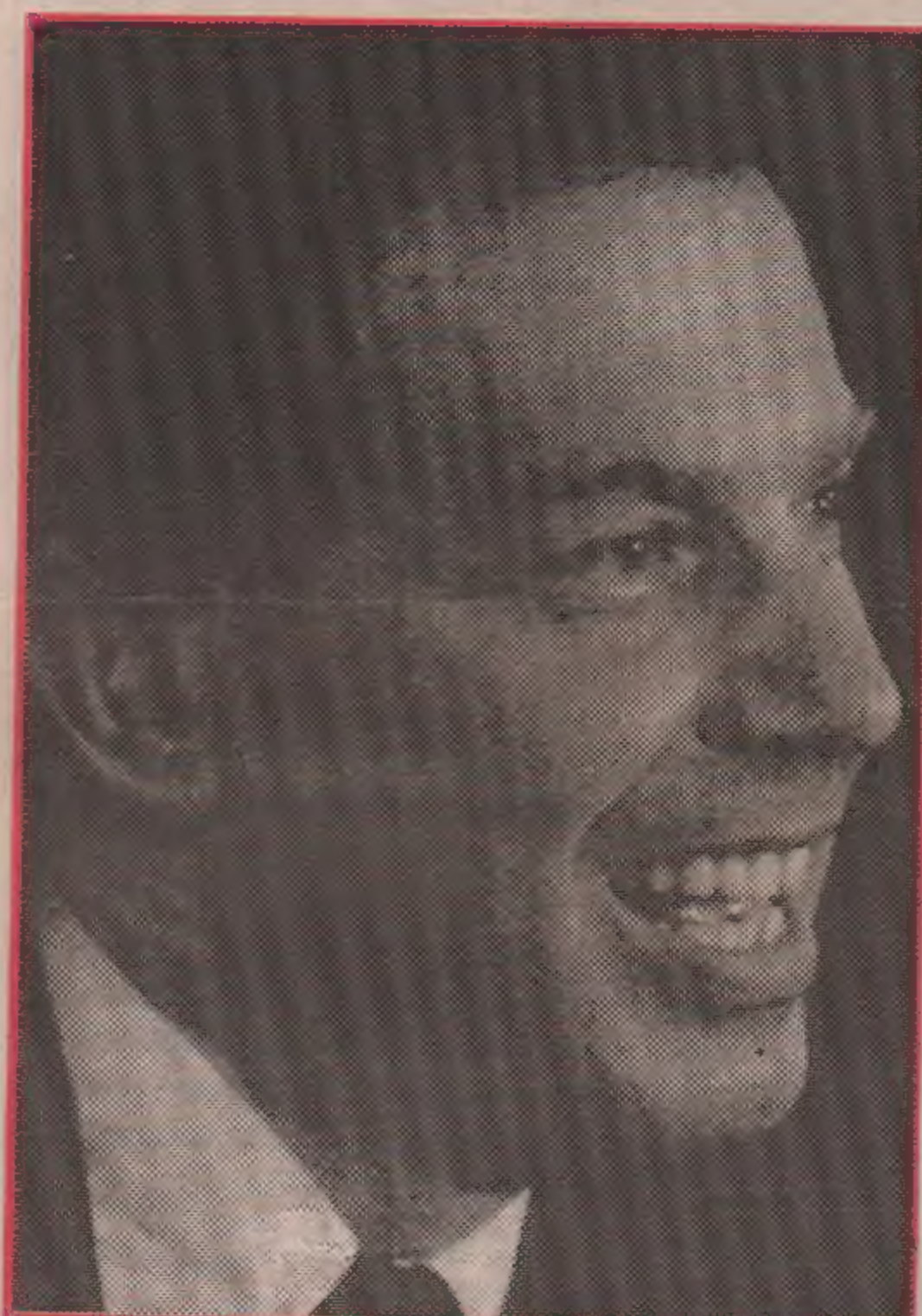
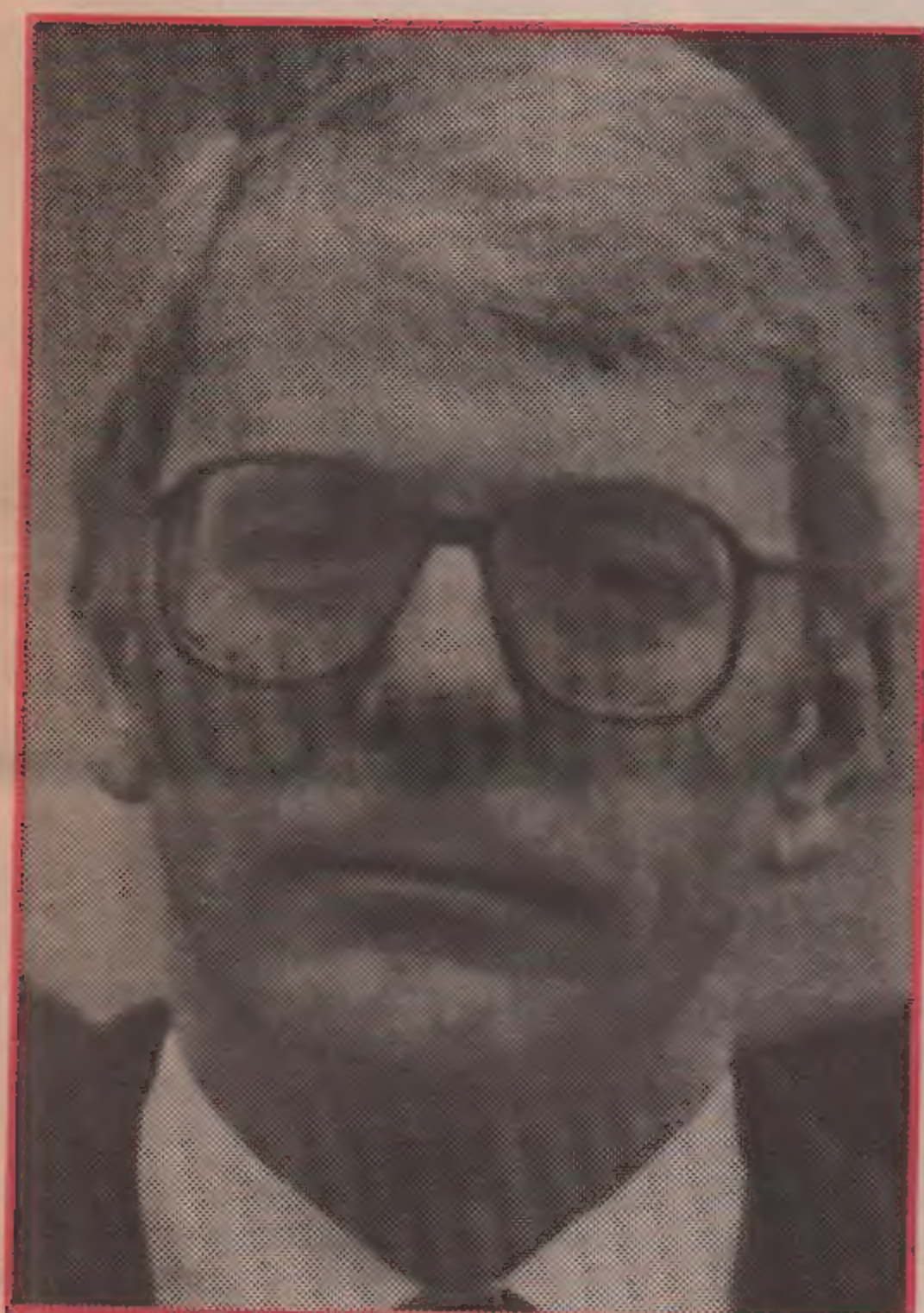
Revolutionary Communist Group

Number 126 August/September 1995

(unwaged 30p) 50p

## 80% of liars, cheats and frauds

Solidarity  
price  
£1



## are white, racist, rich and work in Westminster

GET  
TOUGH ON  
CRIME  
**KICK**  
THEM OUT!

**Inside:** EDITORIAL: Tories muddle through p2 • BOSNIA - The Hidden Agenda p4 • HIROSHIMA - the facts behind US genocide p7 • NEW LABOUR - Old Poor Law: the nastiest product of New Labour p8/9 • CUBA: fighting the propaganda war / Rock around the blockade p10/11 • PRISONS - Save Mumia Abu-Jamal / Free Irish prisoners p12/13 • BRENT SPAR - Shell Shock p16



# Tories muddle through summer of discontent

The ruling class is well satisfied with the outcome of the Tory leadership election, at least for the present. Well behind in the polls, Tory MPs followed a brute survival instinct and by a large majority (218-89) rejected the narrow British nationalism of Tory rightwingers. John Major is barely capable of holding together the irreconcilable factions which now make up the Tory coalition or of offering them a faint possibility of holding on to their seats. Nonetheless, he is their only hope.

Behind the divisions in the Tory party lie two important issues which affect the future prospects for British capitalism. The first is about Europe. Is it possible to contain the deep conflicts of interest between the national capitalist/imperialist powers which make up the European Union to create a supra-national regional bloc capable of meeting the challenge of US and Japanese imperialism? If so, should Britain play a central role in Europe and would this help to reverse Britain's long-term economic decline?

The second concerns the class struggle within Britain. Confronted by relative economic decline, British capitalism can only remain competitive internationally by creating greater and greater inequality. Class divisions are widening and any government committed to policies favourable to middle class voters will increase such divisions with serious social and political consequences. Can they be contained?

The Tory party has divided broadly into two factions on both these issues. The first, the so-called 'one nation' Tories, see Europe as the framework for sustaining Britain's influence as a global imperialist power and arresting Britain's long-term decline. While adhering to 'free market' policies, low taxation and tight control of public spending, they remain committed to a level of state welfare if only to avoid 'the dereliction and decay of American cities and the absolute poverty of the American poor' (Kenneth Clarke).

The right-wing nationalists reject Europe as restricting British sovereignty and control over economic policy. They sustain the illusion that Britain could stay out of Europe and still remain an influential imperialist power. They support, with few reservations, neo-liberal economic policies, free markets, lower taxes and the 'minimal state'. A recent call by prominent historian Lord Skidelsky for a reduction of state expenditure to pre-1914 levels – 30 per cent of national income – would get their support. They favour a strongly centralised state with higher defence and law and order spending so that

Britain could still wave the national flag and be able to terrorise the internal opposition which would rapidly grow under their policies.

These are the capitalist alternatives. They cannot coexist within the same party and although the Conservative coalition could survive to the next General Election it will eventually break down. It will be



Bradford: youth fought police racism

replaced in government by a new party of 'one-nation' conservatives – Blair's Labour Party. For the victory of Major and the support for Blair shows that the middle classes are not yet sufficiently threatened to choose the right-wing option. They will, for the present, put their faith in 'New Labour' to sustain their high living standards, state handouts, and quality welfare services (state or private) while millions more working class people are driven into poverty to pay for it. But if Blair fails, waiting in the wings to receive the depleted ranks of the very angry and disillusioned middle classes will be a new right-wing nationalist Tory party ready and willing to do the job.

A recent report by a market research group Mintel shows that already the middle income groups are beginning to be squeezed as the divisions between rich and poor grow. The rich – top 20 per cent of earners with average household income of £42,818 in 1993 – increased their share of total household income from 35 per cent in 1979 to a forecast 49 per cent this year. While the share of household spending of the poor – the bottom 40 per cent of earners with average household income of £6,088 – halved in the same period from 24.5 per cent to 12.5 per cent. The number of rich adults has increased from 9m to 11.1m since 1979, the poor increased from 16.5m to 17.3m, while the middle income groups fell from 30.7m to 30.1m. This process will almost certainly accelerate over the next few years as sections of the middle classes are driven back into the ranks of the poorer working class.

Such developments underline the urgency of building a working class socialist move-

ment in Britain ready to face the violence and oppression that the ruling class will unleash as economic and social conditions for the ever growing ranks of the poor – what sociologists insultingly call the 'underclass' – rapidly deteriorate. Already those fighting poverty, racism, police oppression, and environmental destruction have rejected the sham of parliamentary democracy and have taken to the streets to fight with whatever weapons they find to hand. As in the 1980s, so in the 1990s, black and white youth have fought police racism and oppression with bricks and petrol bombs with increasing regularity throughout Britain. In the last month or so alone street battles with the police have taken place in Bradford, Luton, Leeds and Nuneaton. Undoubtedly many more clashes take place but remain unreported.

While the so-called socialist left in Britain entertains itself with discussions on the trade union role and share of votes in the racist, imperialist Labour Party, real revolutionaries take quite a different stand. They learn from the words of revolutionary fighters like former Black Panther Mumia Abu-Jamal, threatened with execution in August by the racist US judicial system (report page 13). In rejecting the description of today's alienated young black population as 'a lost generation' he tells us:

'...they are not so much lost as they are mislaid, discarded by this increasingly racist system that undermines their inherent worth.

'They are all potential revolutionaries, with the historic power to transform our dull realities.

'If they are lost, find them.'

It is from among the discarded people of this increasingly rotten and oppressive system that the revolutionary fighting force of the future will draw its troops.

## COMMUNIST FORUMS

A series of public discussions of communist politics introduced by Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!

Meitdown: the crisis of international finance

London: Sunday 10 September, 2pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1 (Holborn tube). £1/50p

Speaker: Trevor Rayne. Creche available on application.

Manchester: Details to be announced

Tel: 0171 837 1688 for details

## News

# The state that kills

CAT WIENER

On 12 July, the Police Complaints Authority announced that no disciplinary measures would be pursued against three Scotland Yard officers following their acquittal for the unlawful killing of Joy Gardner. At the same time, the callous indifference of the state to the death of black people was highlighted when Police Commissioner Condon called a meeting to discuss black people and crime on the second anniversary of Joy Gardner's death.

Two years on, no one has been or will ever be brought to book for her murder. Not police constables Colin Whitby and John Burrell and Detective Sergeant Linda Evans who, on 28 July 1993, accompanied by local police officers and an immigration official, smashed their way into Joy Gardner's house, chased her round the room, pushed her to the ground, stood on her and forcibly restrained her with a body belt, leg irons, a gag and 13 ft of tape in the presence of her five-year-old son. They have been acquitted. Not the senior officers who gave them their instructions – they have taken early retirement without explanation, certainly without apology, to Joy's family. Not the Home Office and immigration service who prescribe instruments of torture and death to their officials to hunt down, restrain and deport so-called illegal immigrants. They have merely issued token guidelines

restricting the use of gags and encouraging police and immigration officials to be alert to the possible distress of those they restrain. There has been no public inquiry into Joy Gardner's death.

Instead, propaganda around the trial was used to whip up popular frenzy against 'illegal' entrants (although, in fact, Joy entered the country legally and



Joy Gardner: no justice

was appealing against her deportation order at the time she was murdered. Neither she nor her solicitors knew that her appeal had been turned down.) Much was made of Joy's alleged 'violence' towards the police when woken in the early hours of the morning and told to pack her bags. The real message comes through loud and clear: the death of Joy Gardner is to be a warning to black people, and a deterrent to would-be entrants to Britain: submit, or be killed. The terror provoked by the methods of the immigration ser-

vise and police have caused at least two more deaths since Joy Gardner was killed. In April 1994, a bailiff accompanied by police pounded on the door of the flat where Kwanele Siziba was staying, threatening to break their way in. She was convinced it was the immigration service and, terrified, tried to climb out of a fifth-storey window. She fell to her death. That October, immigration officials broke into the flat of Joseph Nnalue. While they questioned his pregnant wife about her immigration status, he too tried to climb out of a window and fell to his death.

As the three police officers walked triumphantly from court, the press made much of their relief and that of their families after their two-year ordeal. What about the anguish of the families of those the state kills? Police continued to question Grace Nnalue while her husband lay dying on the pavement outside; Kwanele Siziba's brother and sister were prevented from going outside after they had seen her body from the window while the police checked their ID. After two years' campaigning, Myra Simpson, Joy Gardner's mother, has yet to see justice for her murdered daughter.

■ **Public meeting: No to Immigration raids! No more deaths in police custody!** Speakers include the families of Joseph Nnalue, Joy Gardner and Kwanele Siziba, and the brother of Brian Douglas, killed by a blow from a police baton. Monday 31 July, 7pm, St Anselm's Hall, Kennington Road (corner Sancroft Road), London SE11.

# Name the real criminals

CHRIS JAMES

Paul Condon's recent statement to the effect that 80 per cent of 'muggers' in London are young black men – which, incidentally was 'mysteriously leaked' to the press – does have one dubious commendation. It has demonstrated the extent to which racism is endemic to not only the Metropolitan police but, as politicians and press rallied to Condon's side, to British society as a whole.

Condon, in a letter to various black 'community leaders', claimed: 'it is a fact that very many of the perpetrators of muggings are very young black people, who have been excluded from school and/or are unemployed.' The statistic then bandied about was that 80 per cent of London muggers are young black men. Dig deeper, and we find that 80 per cent of muggers in some London areas – Harlesden, Stoke Newington and Lambeth – are young black men. Dig deeper still, and Condon's personal assistant admits there are no figures to support these claims, and Condon's Assistant Commissioner, is hurrying to *The Voice's* south London offices to apologise for having got it wrong. Too late – tabloids are screaming '80 per cent of London Muggers Black!' For which read, '80 per of young black men are criminals.' In an instant, the whole black community is criminalised as police and racists claim, 'Look, we were

right all along and thank god we can now say so freely.'

Condon's attempt to get black middle class sanction for the reintroduction of blanket street crime operations in black areas has understandably failed. All black organisations have refused to attend Condon's meeting. Such blatant racism forced even opportunists like black MP Paul Boateng to point out that City fraud is overwhelmingly committed by white, upper-class males. Of course, he then went on to argue that the real solution is more police, more money for them, and more goals. Yes, indeed – New Labour, eager to show they are as tough on crime as the Tories.

Condon's leaked statement generated all manner of reactionary discussion, frequently under the guise of 'liberal' balance. *The Guardian's* editorial, whilst conceding that Condon might have dealt with it rather insensitively, claimed the poor man did have a point, and castigated community leaders for responding negatively to a 'well-meant and necessary' initiative.

Necessary for what? Clearly, to maintain the race and class privilege of *The Guardian's* editorial team, but absolutely redundant for tackling the real issues: poverty, denial of education and opportunity, the destruction of inner city community and youth centres and, as always, Britain's constant dependence on racism, both as institution and ideology.

Condon is as reactionary and racist a Commissioner as any previous holder of the post. His

letter had two main objectives. The Met has received a lot of bad press of late on the question of race relations – Joy Gardner killed and three police officers cleared of manslaughter; the long police batons that killed Brian Douglas; a report showing that from April 1993-April 1994 42 per cent of those stopped and searched by police were black. Condon's letter tried to shift the debate: a criminal community attracts criminal brutality. More importantly, Condon was attempting to build on his past – undeserved – 'liberal' image of having 'a good record on race relations' to use the black middle class to ease the path to saturation policing of black areas. Fearing a re-run of Brixton 1981 or Tottenham 1985, where black communities united in fighting police oppression, successfully declaring 'no-go' areas, Condon aimed to unite various black political leaders and perhaps crime-weary black individuals to his racist cause. It's the classic tactic of divide and rule.

Bradford and Luton have confirmed once again the impossibility of policing an alienated, hostile community. A community with elements prepared to condone police action would make life easier. But Condon misjudged the gap between giving an equal opportunity speech, and getting away with unsubstantiated and explicitly racist 'facts'. But he shouldn't worry – any price he has to pay for his blunder won't be on the scale demanded of black people like Brian Douglas.



# Discrimination in the NHS

HANNAH CALLER

**Is a workforce that is overwhelmingly white and male at senior level, able to develop a health service sensitive to the needs of ethnic groups and women?**

Approximately 5.5% of the population of Britain belongs to ethnic groups other than white (three million people). Black and ethnic minority groups make up a significant part of the NHS workforce and are significantly under-represented at senior levels, even in parts of the country where a substantial proportion of the population is from these groups. There is a concentration of black and ethnic minority staff in the least glamorous specialties with the most unsocial duties.

80% of the total number of employees in the NHS are women, yet women represent only 17% of unit general managers, 4% of district and regional managers, and 1% of consultant surgeons.

**Women:** a study of 2,500 NHS employees in the South East Thames Regional Health Authority looked at part-time work. This overwhelmingly affects women. Women with dependent children are much less likely to be working full-time than men. 93% of men with dependent children worked full-time, compared to 47% of women. In 1987, one quarter of nurses worked part-time, rising to one third in 1993. In the 12-month period studied, there was no training time for 40% of part-time staff, compared to 25% of full-time workers.

**Racial stereotypes:** language barriers cause difficulties in accessing health care. In 1983, a study was performed on GPs in Newcastle. They recorded that Pakistani women often pre-

sented them with 'trivial' complaints, and the doctors regarded this as a nuisance (no doubt this feeling was transmitted to the women). Where an interpreter removed the language barrier, the reporting of so-called trivial complaints disappeared.

In 1988 in Birmingham, a study found that stereotypical opinions about black clients by white community nurses, regarding extended families looking after sick family members, were such that black people were not being informed about community services available.

It has been noted that health professionals mark the race of non-white patients more often than the race of white patients, reinforcing the idea of 'other'. The British government officially sanctioned the view that people from Africa are 'high risk' for HIV by refusing to accept blood from people who have visited Africa. This has encouraged racist feelings, and the UK forum on HIV and human rights reports growing pressure on black people to take HIV tests.

*Recruiting staff: under-repre-*

sentation of ethnic minority groups within the medical profession is due to discriminatory hiring practices. In 1988, St George's Hospital medical school's admission policy was exposed as racist. The initial selection decisions were built into a computer programme with a 'score bias' against ethnic minorities. In 1993, two doctors sent CVs with different names and similar details for job applications. They found conclusive discrimination on the basis of 'foreign-sounding' names.

It is estimated that between 1994 and 1996 there will be a 20% cut in nurse training, and that will affect a disproportionate number of applicants from ethnic minorities.

**Mental health:** studies show that people from ethnic minorities are more likely than others to be removed to a place of safety or forcibly detained in hospital or a locked ward under the Mental Health Act. Such treatment is often inappropriate.

Irish people living in Britain have the highest averages of first and subsequent admissions to mental hospitals of any migrant group. Irish people are more than twice as likely to be admitted as their English counterparts and 50% more likely than Afro-Caribbeans, the next highest group.

The employment of people from ethnic minority groups at all levels, in planning, management and delivery of services, is the first step in improving service provision. But we must go further and challenge the old order, challenge the institutionalised racism that capitalism breeds, nurtures and sustains. Virginia Bottomley said, while Secretary of State in June 1995, in relation to the justification of the setting up of the NHS, 'We are all equal in the face of illness.' Reality is very different.



*'Part-time night staff are mainly black women with families. When study courses are available, long periods are given to the white nurses, whereas the black nurses only get one-day seminars. When the staff were regraded, some sisters were made redundant, merely for being militant and supporting the black nurses who were not being given equal opportunities. Immediately after redundancy, white members of staff replaced the black nurses and were upgraded, despite the so-called shortages of funds.'*

*As regards the training, white nurses are being seconded and*

*fully sponsored by the hospital; black nurses are not being seconded, and with day release, need to go on working to support themselves, which leads to difficulty completing projects. The paediatric training, for instance, needs to be completed over three years part-time. The white nurses, fully seconded by the hospital, complete their training in less time. By 1997, nurses will need a certain number of postgraduate courses to be employed: black nurses are not being informed of what training is available.'*

*A health worker from the North Middlesex Hospital*

## Pensioners notes

RENE WALLER

**With better weather during recent weeks, many pensioners are again campaigning on the streets for an adequate pension as a right and not subject to any means test.**

Various politicians have outlined proposals said to ensure this, but in most cases it's been evident that payment would in fact be subject to some form of means test, and I'm proud to report that all such schemes have not even been seriously considered by the pensioners' movement. We want and are determined to get an adequate pension not dependent on passing a means test, and all attempts to sidetrack us will fail, however cleverly disguised.

We also think it monstrous that those who have scraped together a small nest-egg should be penalised if they are forced to go into residential care by ill

health. This is particularly unfair when it leaves a dependent penniless.

It's good to note that all sections of the pensioners' movement seem not only to be surviving but growing, with new forums and action groups being formed. Continual and growing pressure is what is wanted, and an acceptance of the fact that we must mainly rely on ourselves – no passing of militant resolutions and leaving the implementation to the TUC, the Labour Party etc, which over the years has simply provided a place where all inconvenient initiatives could be buried among stacks of similar well-meaning efforts.

We do though intend to lobby the TUC at Brighton in September. The value of this will be measured by the publicity obtained for our demands and the vigour of our campaign. Let's show we mean business and don't want half measures.

## Railway workers fight low pay

BOB SHEPHERD

**At the beginning of July, 12,000 ASLEF train drivers at British Rail began a series of 24-hour strikes against a three per cent pay offer from BR.**

The other main railworkers union, the RMT, had voted 9,503 to 8,980 against strike action over pay. A small number of train drivers who are members of the RMT have driven trains on the strike days. British Rail are bringing in the three per cent pay rise immediately for all sections that voted against strike action. They have also indicated that certain drivers, if they rejected strike action, would get a £200 yearly bonus.

At the time of writing, the drivers are standing firm, and the offer of the £200 may have backfired, as it was not offered to the working RMT drivers,

and they may now be rebalanced over strike action.

The £200 bonus and three per cent pay rise are an insult to railworkers, particularly after the announcement of £362 million profits for BR with 40 senior executives getting a 21 per cent pay bonus!

The fight against low pay, poor working conditions and creeping privatisation seems to be gaining momentum with London tube workers, both ASLEF and RMT voting for strike action. London Underground had 'offered' a 2.75 per cent pay rise and want to contract out large sections of maintenance work. ASLEF and the RMT have agreed to coordinate strike action on British Rail and London Underground on specific dates in July and August.

The railworkers must get the support of all those fighting against low pay and attacks on job security and working conditions.

## What we stand for

**The Revolutionary Communist Group fights for a society which produces for people's needs, not profit – that is, a socialist society.**

Capitalist society is based on the exploitation of the working class by the ruling capitalist class, for profit. Internationally, imperialism divides the world into oppressed and oppressor nations: the majority lives in poverty, while a tiny minority squanders unprecedented wealth. By restricting production worldwide to the narrow limits of profit-making, the basic needs of the majority of humanity cannot be fulfilled.

► In Britain today more than four million are unemployed with many people – women in particular – trapped in low wage, part-time jobs. 25% of the population – the majority women and children – lives in poverty, with lower wages, lower benefit and fewer social services. Meanwhile, money-grabbers in the newly-privatised industries (like the water authorities) and banks amass more profits and pay their directors inflated salaries. **The RCG supports the struggle of the working class to defend and improve its living standards.**

► Racist attacks are on the increase. The police do nothing to defend black people against attack, and instead blame black people for crime. At the same time, Britain's racist immigration laws are used to harass, detain and deport black people. **The RCG fights against racism and fascism in all its forms. We support the right of black people to organise and defend themselves against racist attack. We oppose all immigration laws.**

► While the working class bears the brunt of the crisis, new laws like the Criminal Justice Act have been introduced to criminalise the right to protest. **The RCG opposes the Criminal Justice Act and fights to defend democratic rights – the right to organise and protest.**

► The richest 20% of the world's population consumes 83% of its wealth and resources. It is the capitalist system which consigns billions to poverty. Internationally, oppressed nations are driven into poverty and debt by imperialism as multinationals extort superprofits from the labour of the poor. Throughout Asia, Africa and eastern Europe the effects of the free market are obvious – low wages, appalling work conditions, poverty and starvation for the mass of the people; environmental degradation, corruption and repression in government. **The RCG supports the struggle of all oppressed people against imperialism.**

► The RCG supports socialist Cuba and condemns the illegal US blockade. **We fight actively in defence of the Cuban revolution.**

► In the drive for profits, the needs of human beings and the environment are secondary to the profits of multinational companies. **The RCG supports the struggle to defend the environment.**

► Who will defend the interests of the working class? In Britain, it is clear the Tories defend only the rich and corrupt – but the Labour Party won't defend the working class either. It wants middle class votes in the next election – and has approved many anti-working class laws, including the Criminal Justice Act. The Labour Party is a ruling class party which defends capitalism. **The RCG fights for the independent interests of the whole working class. We do not support any of the pro-capitalist parties in elections.**

The defence of the working class and oppressed can only come from the working class organising democratically and independently in its own interests, in Britain and internationally.

**The Revolutionary Communist Group stands for the rebirth of a socialist movement internationally to destroy capitalism and imperialism and replace them with a socialist society, organised to defend the interests of the working class and oppressed. Join us.**

**Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism  
BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX  
Telephone: 0171 837 1688**



**T**he crisis in Bosnia is the inevitable outcome of the handiwork of those Western powers which worked so hard for the overthrow of socialism in Eastern Europe. They fanned the fire of nationalist and ethnic conflict in the former Yugoslavia in the full knowledge of its lethal potential.

These latest events should give those who have been calling for a more robust defence of the Bosnians by the UN or NATO, pause for thought. The 'safe havens', into which the pincer movement of Croat and, more particularly, Serb nationalists (with the collusion of the Contact Group) has forced the rest of the Bosnian population, have turned out to be a death warrant. In 1993 FRFI wrote:

'The dreadful fate now being discussed for Muslims or those of mixed origin in Bosnia is to be protected by the UN. The Palestinians, Cambodians and Kurds in Iraq are familiar with this fate.'

The most militarily powerful nations on earth guard these 'safe havens' with fewer forces than were mobilised to defeat the miners' strike in Britain or can be routinely gathered to deal with a riot in South London. The few hundred Dutch troops guarding Srebrenica were forced to flee along with the civilians as the Serbs came in. A US plane was reported to have destroyed one Serb tank and then even that was denied. That was it – that was the defence of Srebrenica by a combination of powers that deny many of their own citizens a decent living in order to spend billions on armaments. The arms-embargoed Bosnian army was, in contrast, capable of forcing a breach in Serb lines to get thousands of its soldiers and male refugees out of the area.

#### Hidden agendas

This situation is not, as is commonly said, the result of cowardice or indecision on the part of the imperialist powers. What we are seeing is their policy in operation. They each have an agenda and these agendas have nothing whatsoever to do with the interests of the peoples of the former Yugoslavia and everything to do with calculations of national interest by the imperialist powers. The saving of any region of Yugoslavia as a multi-national, multi-ethnic entity is not now, never has been, and never will be part of the agenda. Once Yugoslavia began to break up, rival nationalist leaderships were inevitably drawn into conflict. When the EC recognised the independence of Slovenia and Croatia they must have known that it would fan Serbian nationalism and the fears and ambitions which fuelled it. Yet they promoted the ethnic partition of Yugoslavia, knowing this would be bound to have its most terrible expression in multi-ethnic Bosnia.

They have let Serbia and Croatia carve up Bosnia. Indeed the Contact Group (US, Britain, France, Germany and Russia) plan was for Serbia and Croatia to have most of Bosnia with the Muslims or mixed origin peoples being sandwiched in the middle and corralled in tiny, unconnected dots on the map. Bosnia now has three statelets – the Serb Republic, the Croat Republic of Herzeg-Bosnia and the Muslim-dominated Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Bosnian army in US-sponsored alliance with the Croats is now more capable of fighting to enlarge or defend some areas and will become more so if, as the USA wishes, the arms embargo is lifted. The newly redrawn map of the region will at some future date be sanctioned by international bodies, yet, drawn in blood, it will bring neither peace nor justice to the region.

#### Confused? You're meant to be

Shortly after Srebrenica fell and Zepa came under attack, as the world

# Bosnia: The hidden agenda

**As the latest shocking images come out of Bosnia – tens of thousands of refugees expelled from what was absurdly known as the UN 'safe haven' of Srebrenica – it is difficult to feel anything but despair. This is the latest appalling episode of a war that has thus far cost 250,000 lives and brought officially-sanctioned rape, torture, murder and forced movement of millions of people to the heart of Europe. This is what the triumph of reaction looks like. MAXINE WILLIAMS reports.**



watched in horror it was revealed that the secret UN policy since the May hostage crisis had been to abandon the 'safe havens' like Srebrenica in the East. They failed to tell anyone this, particularly the refugees in Srebrenica, Zepa and Gorazde. So what was presented in the news as a rather sudden onslaught by the Serbs was actually just UN policy being played out. It is such secret policies and particularly the secret policies of Germany, Britain, France, Russia and the USA that underlie almost everything that has happened in the former Yugoslavia. This secrecy, coupled with the extraordinarily naive or actively misleading commentary in the national press, make it virtually impossible to know what is actually happening in the region.

The commentators collude in the deadly secrecy. Thus Martin Woollacott, writing in *The Guardian* (29 May 1995) on the occasion when the Serbs had captured 300 UN troops and killed the Bosnian foreign minister by shooting down his helicopter over the 'safe haven' of Bihac, said:

'This is the week in which Western governments ought to agree – not necessarily in public but certainly in their inner counsels – that the search for a peace based on the recognition of Serbian primacy is not only immoral but a chimera.'

Heaven forbid that the public should know what its government's policy is especially in a region which has his-

torically proved a powder keg for wider wars! No, it should apparently guess the policy by watching the actions because clearly the commentators are not going to let them in on the secret.

Meanwhile, in this fog of secrecy the lies are being told and the dirty deals are being struck that will spew out more columns of refugees. Thus, having decided to abandon the Eastern 'safe havens' and, after the Serbs had taken Srebrenica, a mock debate took place between France and Britain about whether Srebrenica could be retaken and was seriously reported in the press. But as the debate goes on, so do the preparations for a full UN withdrawal. The sole function of the Rapid Reaction Force, set up by Britain, France and Holland in May following the Serb seizure of 300 UN troops, is not to rescue any Bosnians but to rescue UN troops and get them and their weapons out should this become necessary. While French President Chirac waxes indignant about Serb aggression, we are expected to forget that in 1991, France nearly upset the international appletart by backing Serbia or that French policy in its former colony of Rwanda helped to bring about an ethnic slaughter even more devastating than that going on in Bosnia.

Whilst world bodies gravely ponder their options, Germany, which did so much to encourage war in this region by forcing recognition of Croatian independence and which clearly has ambitions as a regional

power, is rarely – if ever – mentioned. This is another golden rule for the commentaries on this area – 'don't mention Germany'. Thus Britain and France are allowed to strut the world stage whilst the big boys – particularly Germany and the USA – talk elsewhere.

And while every military step in the inexorable progress towards a greater Serbia appears to take the Western world by surprise, are we supposed to forget that US and other powers have satellites that are capable of watching a wart grow on the nose of General Mladic, leader of the Serb forces in Bosnia? Are we supposed to forget that Britain has taken the lead in bringing about recent events in Bosnia; that Britain and France negotiated the release of their soldier hostages in May by expressly agreeing to prevent NATO air strikes on the Serbs? At the time of that deal, the now bellicose France was equally vocal in condemning the air strikes that brought about the crisis.

Telling these powers to 'Do something in Bosnia' is the moral equivalent of employing Jack the Ripper as caretaker in a girls' school.

#### Great power interests

If you do not know what is going on in Bosnia, or in Kosovo, or in Croatia other than that there is a tidal wave of human misery on your screens every night, it is because you are not meant to know. If you do not know what actual interests are driving the seemingly inexplicable policies of the UN and Nato it is because you are not meant to know. We are back to the old days of pre-First World War secret diplomacy in the Balkans, where one power jockeys with another for influence via local national or ethnic groupings.

In some cases such as Britain, as we are told often enough, there are no direct interests involved. That may be so in crude economic terms. But it may equally be the case that Britain is keen to preserve a balance in the area between a Russian-influenced Serbia and a German-influenced Croatia and Slovenia. A strong Serbia would prevent the now unified and still power-hungry Germany from becoming the dominant power in the region. We are also told that the USA has no direct interest in these European affairs. Yet the fact is that the USA has interests in Albania, Bulgaria, Turkey and the Middle East. Hence its more vocal sympathy for the Muslims in Bosnia. It does not want to see a rampant Serbia spreading the war to these regions via

Kosovo. US forces are already in Macedonia and they have made it clear that this is where they will become seriously involved should trouble flare. Meanwhile Germany is quietly and systematically becoming the dominant power in Eastern Europe with enlarged investments and direct influence on its former Hapsburg Balkan regions Croatia and Slovenia. Hardly surprising then that in June the German parliament agreed to send air forces to participate in the Yugoslav conflict, only their second military operation outside their own borders since the Second World War.

The UN operation in Bosnia has been humiliated and discredited not merely by the Serbs but more particularly because the Great Powers simply do not share common interests and therefore cannot act in concert. And so – to break the code in which commentators on this event inevitably write – when you read that the breakdown of the international effort will presage disaster, what this actually means is that each power will pursue its own ends, using either its own or, as is more usual (especially for a USA convulsed with first grief and then joy as one of its pilots was lost and then found in Bosnia), its proxy forces in the region. When this happens the smaller regional powers – Turkey, Greece, Russia – will get further drawn in. Then their Great Power allies, already in fierce economic conflict worldwide, will be on a collision course that could lead to wars more terrible than any we have seen.

#### Can there be peace?

For fifty years in socialist Yugoslavia, a peace was obtained between national and religious groupings whose history was a bloody one. It was the longest period of peace this region had seen and whatever the faults and inadequacies of Tito's Yugoslavia it was paradise compared to the present chaos and death. The peoples of the region are now reduced to their more traditional role of watching their usually-unselected leaders playing off rival Great Powers, seeking backing, begging arms, making deals.

The Serbs have a leader in Milosevic who the imperialist powers claim they can still do business with, despite his obvious pulling of the strings and arming of Serb 'rebels' in Bosnia. It is hard to overstate how dreadful he is. A small sample came when *Time* magazine taxed him about the rape of Bosnian women and he replied that it was untrue and cited a pregnant Muslim girl who claimed rape by Serbs, whose baby when born 'was a Negro, no Serb was a Negro, not one.' The Croatian leadership is fascist in its political leanings, identifying itself with a Croatian nationalist past which included an alliance with Hitler's Germany and dreadful atrocities against anti-fascist Serbs. The Bosnian Muslim leadership, increasingly fundamentalist in tone, has embraced the USA as saviour.

Painful and harsh though it is to say it, there is no hope outside a democratic movement of the peoples of the region, a movement which acts for all the people, rather than one religious or ethnic grouping. There are those in the region who still support this ideal. But there is no hope that such a movement, if it could be reborn in such dreadful circumstances, will be brought into existence courtesy of the imperialists who destroyed it. The left in Britain has been much exercised trying to find policies in relation to Yugoslavia. These policies are meaningless unless there is a movement here that is capable of taking the first necessary step of forcing an end to the secret deals, the secret policies and the self-interested involvement of the Great Powers that endanger not only the people of the Balkans but the people of the world. ■



## Tory leadership election

## Up the garden path – and back

Scene: 22 June, Rose Garden (formerly Mortar Alley), 10 Downing Street. PM John Major, sporting a bright blue polka-dot tie, officially announced the start of Summer for the idle rich – Henley, Ascot, Wimbledon, Goodwood and... a Conservative Party leadership election. Mustering the little decisiveness at his disposal Major dropped the gauntlet at the feet of his fellow Tory MPs – 'Put up or Shut up!'.

This magnificent display of machismo was designed to impress. *The Guardian's* Hugo Young spoke for all true-blooded Englishmen: 'Major may be cautious, he may be a balancer, he may lack charisma...but no one can say again he hasn't got balls.' And that's what matters, isn't it?

This is the Silly Season, so we can put aside the fact that Major is the most unpopular PM ever, and that the Tories drooped 35 points behind Labour in opinion polls. The economy is a disaster area; negative equity is decimating Tory support; unemployment and cuts in welfare have devastated working class people. None of this matters. An 18-nation Gallup poll in June showed that the British have the third most pessimistic view of the future; the second strongest desire to emigrate; and are top of the league for disdain for their own government. Major is apparently more unpopular with his electorate than Ernesto Zedillo, beleaguered Mexican head of state. Ignore this! Our PM has the balls to take on his own Party Eurosceptics (he wittily dubbed them 'Bastards'), who are frightened the 'foreigners' occupying Europe will diminish their puny



Has the PM got balls?

power and moreover that Major's unpopularity will lose them their seats. What guts!

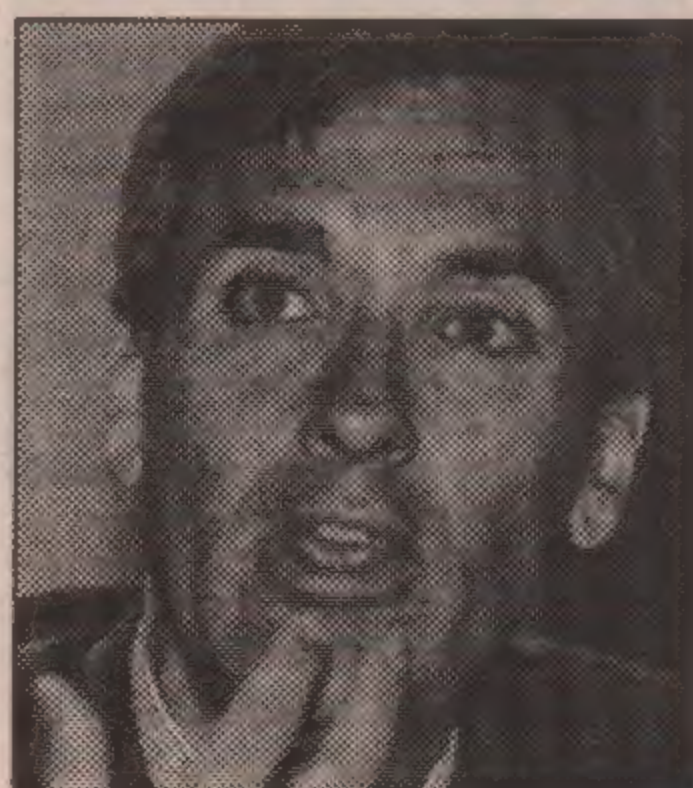
For some days the PM basked in the glory of his unexpected challenge – would any Man dare to stand? Norman ('Unemployment is a price worth paying') Lamont, who has muttered in corners since he was sacked as Chancellor in 1993, turned white and trembled in his boots. Did he have the Balls? Apparently not. In a climate of fevered anticipation some even wondered if Tony Blair would stand.

The arcane ritual of Tory leadership elections requires some understanding of the rules. There are two: firstly, only Tory MPs can vote; secondly, everyone lies. Cabinet Ministers pledged their support for Major. Mrs Thatcher, well familiar with the rules following her own defeat in 1990, said: 'I doubt if any member of the cabinet will challenge him...' (long pause) ...in the first round.' 'It's a very bold stroke' said Portillo midst a wealth of carefully-worded statements of support – some of which, commentators admitted, may have been sincere.

But they were all outflanked. Up steps a candidate for the comic role of 'Stalking Horse'. John Redwood, Welsh Secretary and Cabinet mem-

ber, sporting a grey suit and a grimace announced his candidature: he would be the front end of 'Stalking Horse', the Normans (Lamont and Tebbit) would bring up the rear.

'Everyone here hates him', said Welsh single mother Jo Lewis of Cardiff. 'The rest of the UK is about to find out why Mr Redwood has gone down like a rat sandwich in Wales', said Plaid Cymru. But it does not matter that Redwood is a ghoul and degrees more unpopular than Major. This election is about Bollocks (euroscepticism) not about what the electorate thinks.



'The rest of the UK is about to find out why Mr Redwood has gone down like a rat sandwich in Wales'

Now the race is on. British Telecom works its engineers to a frazzle installing hundreds of telephone and fax lines in rich men's houses across Westminster. Why? In order to canvas 329 Tory MPs, of course. Each candidate must ask them which way they intend to vote a thousand times in one week, note their lies and then phone them back to be sure. This is a real test of balls.

Tension mounts. 4 July is the day. Major (218 votes) beats Redwood (89) with 22 non-voters. Is it enough?...yes! We are back to where we started: Major is the unpopular leader of an unpopular Party. This is *real* drama! Now for the reshuffle. The Loyal must be rewarded: Heseltine gets a personal fiefdom as Deputy PM; Rifkind to the Foreign Office. The Bad and the Ugly must be punished: Redwood joins Lamont in the corner; Aitken throws in the towel at the mention of another scandal. The Incompetent are shuffled round, with Portillo's old job as Secretary of Employment simply wiped out: there will be no more Employment.

This is the end of the Silly Season. They are back to the really serious business of winning the next election and destroying the lives of working class families. It's more of the same: education budgets slashed, greedy executives of monopoly utilities get richer and Private Lee Clegg is set free. What extra is needed? A good dose of racism and xenophobia: Condon attacks black youth and Home Secretary Howard announces a major crackdown on 'migrant fraud' with legions of spies at the ready to deprive black people of any access to education, health and social services. The combined Education/Employment Minister Shephard is on the job, consigning working class youth to more 'work experience' instead of an education. None of the issues have been resolved, least of all the divisions tearing the Tories apart.

Thankfully, some of us have more sense. Working class youth in Bradford, Leeds, Luton and Belfast have a closer grip on reality and better ways of spending the Season. Carol Brickley

## Ireland:

## Loyalists on the march

SARAH BOND

July has always been a fearful month for nationalists in the north of Ireland. It is the loyalist marching season, and with the bowler hats and orange sashes celebrating Protestant ascendancy comes the threat of petrol bombs and gunshots, reminders of the violence on which that ascendancy ultimately relies. No protection can be expected from the RUC. This July, 11 months into the IRA ceasefire, things proved no different. Once again, the sectarian nature of the northern statelet was exposed as the RUC defended loyalist parades while attacking nationalist protests.

The fiercest clashes occurred in the Lower Ormeau Road, Portadown in Armagh. Catholics are now the majority in this area – a reflection of the general trend which has seen the Protestant majority reduced in the Six Counties in the last few decades. Under sustained pressure from a local campaign, the RUC had rerouted Orange marches in the area earlier in the year. But on 12 July, the people of Lower Ormeau Road woke to find themselves under siege. At dawn, 150 Land

Rovers and 1,000 RUC in riot gear surrounded the area to ensure the passage of a parade by the local Orange Lodge – which has just 259 members. Local residents were not allowed to the shops for bread or milk. Journalists were prevented from entering the area. One photographer received blows from an RUC baton as he witnessed a raid on a nationalist



home. Four residents were hospitalised after an RUC attack.

Perhaps the worst incident involved the widow of one of five men killed in the 1992 UVF attack on a bookies' shop in the Lower Ormeau Road. All day, Rosaline McManus kept a vigil outside the shop where her husband had died. When she asked the RUC to ensure that no

Orange bands played as they passed the scene of the massacre, she was told to 'Fuck off'. She was then arrested. Her husband's sister was pushed in her wheelchair into a sidestreet. Around 12 July, a number of nationalist homes were petrol bombed and a Catholic woman was beaten up by a loyalist gang.

In the Garvaghy Road district of Portadown, nationalists succeeded in getting the loyalist march banned from their area. When loyalists tried to defy the ban, a compromise was reached allowing them to march on that occasion, but not on the main 12 July parade. The 48-hour standoff between the RUC and Orange marchers before the compromise was reached reportedly created bitter divisions between RUC officers. There was talk of asking the Chief Constable to give orders direct from the top to prevent indecision on the ground.

If rerouting one loyalist parade causes such crisis in RUC ranks, how would it respond to more significant concessions to nationalists? The incidents in July clearly show the obstacles to reforming the artificial Six County state. Nothing short of its destruction will guarantee peace for the nationalist working class. ■

## Police say you pay

TREVOR RAYNE

Ravers came face to face with the Criminal Justice Act on 7 July. They had intended to hold 'the Mother of all Festivals' on that day, but what they got were telephone taps, road blocks, police break-ins, equipment seized and arrests. Well done those who managed to defy the cops and find a space to dance.

Under the CJA, police can ban gatherings of 20 or more people. If the police want, they can exclude people within a five-mile radius if they are suspected of trying to attend an illegal gathering. In addition, they have powers to seize sound systems which they suspect are to be used for a rave – characterised by music with 'a loud, repetitive beat' – gaol organisers and fine party-goers if they want. And they do want.

Sites in Northamptonshire and Devon were chosen for the festival. Despite careful efforts, both were ringed by police who threatened everyone with the CJA. Two people from the Advance Party, which organises raves, came home to find police searching their home and answering the telephone – people phoning about the festival found themselves being asked for names, addresses and who they were travelling with. Another sound system operator had her house turned over after police kicked the door down. Others had their systems impounded. This massive police operation was to deal with people who wanted to party! Free movement, free music? No way – police say, 'You pay.' ■

## Release all Irish POWs now!

NICKI JAMESON

The release of Private Lee Clegg on Monday 3 July to rejoin the British Army after serving just four years of his life sentence for the murder of Irish teenager Karen Reilly is an insult to so many people it is hard to know where to start. So, let's begin, as Michael Howard would encourage us to do, with the family of the victim: 'How can I go and tell her that her killer is free, that her life meant nothing, that if you're a Catholic and working class and from West Belfast, you're treated like dirt?' said Karen's father Sean Reilly, on hearing of Clegg's release.

The release was well timed by John Major and Patrick Mayhew. It came the day before the Tory leadership contest. It was the action of a government which is saying to the entire Nationalist population, as well as to the hundreds of POWs serving long sentences: 'Peace on our terms – we call the shots'.

The people of the occupied Six Counties of Ireland made it absolutely clear what they thought of that attitude when they erupted into spontaneous street protests only hours after the announcement of Clegg's release. For the next week there were rallies, marches and pickets; roads were blocked, cars, vans and buses torched, petrol bombs thrown at the RUC.

The release of Lee Clegg is also a kick in the teeth for all those men and women in British gaols who are campaigning to prove their innocence and who continue to be told that they cannot be released until

they 'come to terms with their crimes'. Private Clegg has not 'come to terms' with the death of Karen Reilly and his supporters continue to insist simultaneously on his 'innocence' and on his right to kill. ■

## Direct Action

As soon as London Saoirse heard of Clegg's release, they held a picket of the Home Office. And the following day they exploited the ready-made media opportunity on College Green opposite the House of Commons to get the message across: 'Clegg out – all out', 'Release all Irish POWs!'.

There were a dozen TV camera crews set up on the small green, with obliging Tory MPs being interviewed live for the early evening news about the Tory leadership election. Thirty Saoirse supporters, armed with Irish tricolours and placards demanding the transfer and release of all POWs, staged a mobile picket, moving between camera crews, chanting slogans. Our activities thoroughly upset the journalists and MPs, who were forced to turn off the cameras or cut short their interviews, and the police, who were unable to respond in the confined space with the very public media coverage. At one point, two very agitated motorcycle police, complete with crash-helmets and jackboots, attempted to wade into the demonstrators, only to be led out and calmed down by other police! The police did eventually move us across the road to Parliament Square, but not before we had ensured our place on that evening's live TV! Pam Robinson

## Nursery vouchers – handout for the middle class

NICKI JAMESON

With one eye blatantly on the next General Election, the first announcement of John Major's revamped Cabinet was of its intention to bribe middle class parents with a donation towards the education of their four-year-old children. But the scheme immediately ran into difficulties, with local authorities and playgroup co-ordinators threatening a boycott of the pilot scheme.

There are 650,000 four-year-olds in Britain and the scheme, whereby their parents receive 'pre-school education vouchers' worth £1,100, is due to be fully introduced in February 1997.

The voucher scheme will not automatically provide more places, nor will it develop existing playgroups into a system which allows mothers to work. Nor will it, in fact, increase parental choice for more than a handful of middle class parents.

Those parents whose children currently receive state education will hand over their vouchers to the local authorities to pay for the provision they now receive free of charge. Who is to meet the shortfall between the voucher and the estimated cost of a state nursery place (£2,000) or a nursery class in an infant school (£1,400) has not been explained. Although Education Minister Gillian Shephard maintains it will not be the parents, no extra money is being made available to local councils. Shephard is already talking about relaxing the rules on staff to child ratios and standards of equipment and premises. Stand by for horror stories of abuse and squalor.

The only winners in this scheme will be parents who can afford private nursery schools. Places at these cost upwards of £3,000 per year, completely out of the reach of working class parents and a big expenditure for some of the middle classes, who will now see their costs reduced by £1,100. ■

## 'Barings panic over' official

TREVOR RAYNE

Barings' collapse was due to 'the unauthorised and ultimately catastrophic activities of, it appears, one individual', according to the Bank of England 337-page report.

Yes, indeed, look no further than Mr Nick Leeson, agreed Chancellor Kenneth Clarke. So bring him for trial! Not so fast, says the Chancellor: 'If he goes to Singapore, no doubt he will have a fair trial.' No doubt at all, probably as fair as the Bank of England report which has already doctored the evidence to judge Leeson in his absence.

Leeson was a crook, but not half the crook his bosses still are, who stood to make £1 million bonuses from Leeson's deals. Now Leeson has been given an out-of-the-way fixture. Panic over – a little blood spilled, but none of it blue. ■



## Turkey and Kurdistan

TREVOR RAYNE

■ The Turkish state flatly rejected PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party) Chairman Abdullah Ocalan's May offer of a ceasefire in return for negotiations towards a political solution of the Kurdish conflict. Instead, it has continued its incursions into northern Iraq/south Kurdistan and its scorched earth policy in southeast Turkey/northwest Kurdistan. In response, 10,000 mainly Kurdish prisoners of war launched a hunger strike in Turkish gaols on 14 July. Their demands are:

1. In order to reach a political settlement, calls made by the PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan for a dialogue, as a first step, must be supported and encouraged.
2. Geneva Convention regulations covering combatants must be observed and enforced in Kurdistan.
3. The killing of civilians, summary executions, torture in prisons, burning of villages must come to an end.
4. All war prisoners in gaols must be classified as POWs.
5. All military operations intended to destroy our people must stop.
6. UN and Red Cross delegations must be sent, in order to monitor the war in Kurdistan and the prison conditions. This dirty war and all killings can be stopped by common and cohesive action. We believe not in war but in an honourable peace.

■ 43 prisoners in Rochester prison in Kent went on hunger strike in solidarity with Kurds in Turkey on 20 July. They are from Romania, India, Yugoslavia, Kurdistan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Zaire and Pakistan.

■ 244 people, including two

children, were detained in Ankara on 6 July during the trial of the People's Democracy Party (HADEP) leaders. Among those detained were the President of the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey and Chairman of the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects, the Secretary General and the Vice Secretary General of the Human Rights Association and a former Democracy Party (DEP) MP. Defence lawyers were also among those arrested. The accused face 15 years in prison on charges of being PKK members.

■ Yashar Kemal, Turkey's best-known author, is being prosecuted for promoting Kurdish 'separatism' in an article in *Der Spiegel* magazine. Kemal faces five years' imprisonment. In court he asked, 'Wasn't Turkey declared among the countries ranking high in torture? Weren't thousands of Kurdish villages burned down?'

■ The British Crown Prosecution Service has said it does not have enough evidence to prosecute anyone for the boiling oil attack on Cafer Kovaycin last October in Swaleside Prison, Kent. The identities of the two attackers are known in the prison to its governor, the Home Office and the Turkish Embassy in London.

■ **Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!** supports the campaign against holidaying in Turkey – remember, 'a tourist pound buys a bullet for a Kurd'.

■ Free Kani Yilmaz and all Kurdish political prisoners: Public meeting Sunday 30 July, 2.30pm, Kurdistan Workers' Association, 11 Portland Gardens, London N4. Speakers: Kani Yilmaz's solicitor, Bridget Irving, John Austin-Walker MP.

## Money, Money, Money

### Greenbury shuffle

To cool off the row about executive pay the government appointed Sir Richard Greenbury, chairman of Marks and Spencer and non-executive director of Lloyds Bank and Zeneca, to head a committee on executive pay. Sir Richard is of the 'lead by example, pay tied to performance' school and, as he explained, that is why he earns £800,000 a year.

Two-thirds of major British companies operate executive share option schemes whereby executives are given shares in the firms as part of their pay. This has seen some fabulous scams in the privatised utilities, with directors walking off with lots of loot. Greenbury's committee recommended that such windfalls should be taxed as income, rather than capital gain, when shares are sold on. The Chancellor responded to the July report saying he would impose the tax.

Outrage! That the rich should pay a penny more – intolerable. Suddenly it was found that the middle classes (oh, those precious middle class votes) would also have to pay. Greenbury turned on the Chancellor and said the old taxation system should hold for share option gains of up to £30,000. This was always his criteria – the Chancellor had gone too far. Then, in some marvellous scenes before a House of Commons committee, Sir Richard has a fit of pique. 'What's been in it for us, except an enormous amount of hard work and a great deal of slugging off? I've had enough... running these companies may seem to be very easy to you, but it isn't.' It was difficult requiring people 'not to be frightened of the numbers involved.' Excellent.

Trevor Rayne

## French nuclear tests

# Nuclear colonialism and nuclear racism

FRANCIS SQUIRE

Mururoa is a horseshoe-shaped atoll a few hundred kilometres southeast of Tahiti in the South Pacific. From September until May next year, it will be the scene of French nuclear bomb tests. President Jacques Chirac has said that the decision to undergo the tests is 'irrevocable'. This has provoked anger in much of the world, but little reaction here in Britain. A British Foreign Office spokesman said, 'the decision is for the French.'

A very high profile has been given to the activities of Greenpeace, but the campaign against the tests is far broader than that. 80 per cent of New Zealanders and over 90 per cent of Australians are boycotting French products. Australia has frozen all military ties with France and recalled its French ambassador. The South Pacific Games, due to be staged in French Polynesia in August, are to be targeted. In New Zealand, the French ambassador's residence was pelted with horse manure while the ambassador held a party to celebrate Bastille Day. In France protesters, led by green and communist organisations, are demanding that the money being used for the tests be spent on welfare and housing. In particular, the tests and the environmental issues surrounding them are a major focus for independence movements.

On 29 June, to mark the arrival of the Greenpeace ship *Rainbow Warrior II* into the port of Papeete in Tahiti, demonstrators blocked off all major roads in the town. Meanwhile, a delegation of Tahitians presented to the French High Commissioner a letter addressed to Chirac demanding a referendum on the

tests. The blockade of Papeete, which lasted three days and nights while the *Rainbow Warrior II* was anchored there, was led by the Tavini Huiraatana Independence Movement.



Boycott French produce

*Rainbow Warrior II* then sailed towards Mururoa. Its passengers included Jacques Gaillet, who was dismissed from his position as a bishop for his campaigns against Chirac's mayoralty of Paris and Oscar Temamu, leader of the Liberation Front of Polynesia.

On 9 July, as she neared Mururoa, four warships surrounded *Rainbow Warrior II*, 150 French marine commandos boarded the ship and violently seized control. Crew members were beaten up and teargas was used. A dramatic blow-by-blow account of the attack that was broadcast worldwide came to an abrupt end when radio equipment was destroyed with an axe. This attack took place ten years to the day after French agents sank the original *Rainbow Warrior* in Auckland harbour, killing Portuguese photographer Fernando Pereira. Although *Rainbow Warrior II* was forced out of the region,

Greenpeace's action wasn't completely foiled. Earlier, three activists, including the organisation's 63-year-old honorary chairperson David McTaggart had left the ship and set sail for Mururoa in an inflatable raft to disrupt preparations for the tests. France's sophisticated detective equipment has been unable to pinpoint their whereabouts.

De Gaulle introduced nuclear tests to the once beautiful islands and atolls of the South Pacific after France lost its war against the Algerian liberation movement. Between 1966 and 1974 France exploded 39 bombs. Smuggled photographs of the bombings caused so much outrage that underground tests were introduced.

The French government claims that underground tests are safe. 'In that case,' said one Polynesian, 'why don't they do it in the Massif Centrale?'. In fact, the tests have been murderous. Radiation has meant that leukemia and many types of cancer are common in the South Pacific. Babies are born with serious disabilities and disorders of the internal organs. Beautiful scenery has been destroyed, marine life has been destroyed. Gali Tatariari, a Polynesian activist, said in a recent TV interview, 'I clearly have the right to accuse France of state terrorism, nuclear colonialism and nuclear racism.'

What you can do:

- Boycott French wine and other produce. You can replace it with Australian and New Zealand wines. Both governments have broken off military relations with France in protest.
- There will be regular vigils outside the French Embassy in London. Tel: 0171 700 2393 for details.
- Send a postcard voicing your opposition to President Jacques Chirac, Palais de l'Elysee, 55-57 Rue de Faubourg Ste Honoré, Paris 75008, France.

## Stalker:dirty tricks continue

MAXINE WILLIAMS

In late June Manchester police made an out-of-court settlement of £1 million to a local businessman who had accused them of malicious prosecution. So what's new there, you might ask – the police often pay out damages and compensation, admittedly not usually that much.

What is remarkable in this case is that the businessman was Kevin Taylor, a friend of the former Manchester deputy Chief Constable of Manchester, John Stalker. The £1 million payment was the latest episode of the Stalker affair which began in 1984, when Stalker was asked by the Royal Ulster Constabulary to investigate the shoot-to-kill deaths of five Irish men by the same RUC unit.

Stalker, having been appointed on the assumption that he would do the usual whitewash job, upset the authorities by conducting a thorough investigation and finding that a systematic policy of shoot-to-kill was in operation in the Six Counties. Amidst panic amongst the higher echelons of the RUC and security services, Stalker was suddenly and dramatically

taken off the investigation and removed from duty, charged with misconduct. Amongst the allegations against him was that his friendship with Taylor was improper and underlying the allegation was the implication that Taylor was a criminal.



John Stalker

Despite their efforts no evidence of wrongdoing was found against Stalker and he was reinstated to the police but kept off the shoot-to-kill case. He resigned, convinced that his persecution had come about because of the shoot-to-kill inquiry.

Meanwhile, presumably to back up their allegations, Manchester police launched de-

tailed inquiries against Taylor and pursued him for years. He claims that he was ruined as part of the get-Stalker vendetta, and the court settlement in June backs up his case.

So sensitive was the Taylor court case that the government issued a Public Interest Immunity Certificate to prevent Stalker giving evidence. He was allowed to testify in court but only on non-security matters. Even so, interesting matters did emerge. The officer in charge of Manchester's CID at the time of the Stalker affair had produced a report claiming that Stalker was 'an IRA sympathiser'. This report was used to assist the campaign to get Stalker off the shoot-to-kill inquiry.

The Stalker affair allowed a rare glimpse into the mechanisms which uphold Britain's murderous policy in the Six Counties of Ireland. It showed that even an Establishment figure who pursues the quest for truth about police and military operations in the Six Counties is likely to suffer harsh consequences. It, like the recent Lee Clegg release, showed that there can be no justice for those who fall victim to the British state's murder machine in Ireland. ■

## Rent rises – a social timebomb in East Germany

The initial euphoria that followed the long-awaited changes in the GDR lasted little longer than a few months.

A first short period of total freedom and basic democracy, with decision-making by the people, was followed by the introduction of West German laws and habits. That meant change regarding virtually all social, economic and cultural issues. Most apparent at the beginning was the dramatic rise of unemployment; especially amongst women and persons over 50 years old. Since unemployment had not been known by East Germans, the resulting feelings of degradation and uselessness could not be handled by many, and led to alcoholism and violence.

Social structures like national health care clinics, creches, kindergartens, after-school activities, youth clubs, senior citizens' centres vanished. At the same time there was, however, a rise in income, together with

many opportunities for consumption, freedom to travel for those with the money to do so, and also access to West German TV programmes.

The economic misconception that East Germans had – buying high quality goods, and at the same time paying subsidised prices for their everyday expenses – first became obvious with the rise of food prices. The most severe blow was yet to come – the dramatic rise in rent and utility services rates. Even the Unity Treaty, although negotiated predominantly by conservative forces, required a socially sound transition for the benefit of lower income groups. Five years later, little is left to protect the poor.

Rents, without any improvement to buildings or individual flats, rose seven to ten times. Even with housing benefit, available for the poorest, it is extremely difficult for a large proportion of the population to make ends meet. Nevertheless,

the government has allowed landlords to raise rents again by 15 per cent, and by another 15 per cent for new tenants. Affordable housing is no longer a basic social right, but yet another lucrative way of making a profit.

How explosive the situation is can be seen in the popular slogan, 'Rents are going through the roof – the tenants, too!' If rent increases are not matched by income rises across a broad section of the population and an expansion of social housing, the majority of East Germans will be as far away from the 'golden' West as they were a decade ago – only now, however, poor, disillusioned and without hope for a change for the better.

It is ironic to see how right our dogmatic politicians and ideology teachers were about some aspects of life in the West – and how blind to the stagnation and advanced decay of their own country.

Susanne Paul, Berlin



'The historic fact remains that the decision whether or not to use the atomic bomb to compel the surrender of Japan was never an issue,' Winston Churchill.

'The greatest thing in history,' US President Truman.

On 6 August 1945 the US Air Force dropped 'Little Boy,' named after President Roosevelt, on Hiroshima. 140,000 were killed, they are dying still. Three days later 'Fat Man', named after Churchill, killed 110,000 in Nagasaki. This terrifying force was unsheathed not primarily to bring Japan to its knees, but to announce US imperialism as the dominant world power. The bomb would guarantee dominance.

# Hiroshima

**T**he British government consented to the use of the bomb on 4 July. It tested successfully in the New Mexican desert on 16 July 1945. 'It was sunrise such as the world had never seen, a great green super-sun climbing in a fraction of a second to a height of more than 8,000 feet, rising ever higher until it touched the clouds, lighting up earth and sky all around with a dazzling luminosity', *The New York Times*. 'I am become death, destroyer of worlds' - Robert Oppenheimer, 'father of the atom bomb', recited the Bhagavad Gita as he watched.

Berlin's Potsdam Conference of Truman, Churchill and Stalin opened the following day. Churchill received a note from the US Secretary of War, 'Babies satisfactorily born'. He was delighted: 'we should not need the Russians' to beat the Japanese. Considering their different spheres of influence Churchill observed that the US President 'told the Russians just where they got on and off...'. On 19 July the US Joint Chiefs of Staff adopted a policy of 'striking the first blow'. Returning from Potsdam, Truman ordered General Eisenhower to draft a plan for all out war against the Soviet Union, seen as the main challenge to US power.

The US Army concluded that Japan had made the decision to surrender by 26 June. A 1946 US Strategic Bombing Survey states, 'the Japanese would have surrendered even if the atomic bomb had not been used'. Two days after the Hiroshima explosion the Red Army attacked the Japanese forces. Japan's Prime Minister told his War Council, 'the entry this morning of the Soviet Union into the war puts us in a hopeless position and makes it impossible to continue the war'. The next day Nagasaki. Truman claimed the two bombs had saved the lives of first a quarter, then a half and finally a million US soldiers. US invasion plans projected 20,000 US dead.

## 'The sun and the earth melted together'

'The sum spent on the atomic project, £500 million, is much more than had been spent on the whole of scientific research and development since the beginning of time.' J D Bernal

The explosive effect of the bomb on Hiroshima was thought to be 15,000 tons of TNT, but how it would affect the population in the short and long term nobody knew.

A blinding flash, 'the sound of an enormous door slamming in the depths of hell', buildings flattened, a firestorm, darkness, a whirlwind strong enough to tear down trees... radiation:

'As we talked, large blisters formed on Noriko's face and it became so swollen that I could scarcely recognise her. At the river we saw a young schoolgirl slowly walking along with pieces of skin hanging

from her arms. Someone said she was trying to cool her burned skin, but as she rubbed water on it came off. She cried in pain.' Hideko Tamura Friedman

'For more than a decade after the bombings, the hibakusha - literally 'explosion-affected persons' - lived in an economic limbo. Non-hibakusha employers developed a prejudice against the survivors as word got around that they were prone to all sorts of ailments: a nagging weakness and weariness, dizziness now and then, digestive troubles, all aggrieved by a feeling of oppression, a sense of doom, for it was said that unspeakable diseases might at any time plant flowers in the bodies of their victims and even of their descendants.' John Hersey, *Hiroshima*

Waves of death and disease passed through the survivors: radiation induced cataracts, leukaemia, mental retardation and abnormal head sizes among pre-natally exposed children, thyroid cancers, breast, lung, stomach and colon cancers. The hibakusha say the US regarded them as laboratory guinea pigs or rats.

## Strategies and plans

Just before World War Two, Wall Street bankers and industrialists, seeing the British Empire waning and seeking to replace it, moved into the US War and State departments. From 1945 they devised a series of nuclear attack plans against the Soviet Union, increasing the number of Soviet cities to be destroyed from 20 in 1945 to 200 in 1949 and 3,261 by 1957. These plans had nothing to do with 'deterrence', 'defence', etc; they were to win a nuclear war. At no time were they discussed with the US people.

A key figure in the first plans was millionaire merchant banker turned Defence Secretary James Forrestal. Forrestal believed the US media, government and schools were infiltrated by communists from 'international Jewry'. He collaborated with J Edgar Hoover in 'exposing communist subversion'.

US nuclear war strategy contains two principles: strike first and escalation dominance. Escalation dominance requires domination at each stage of weaponry and cultivating the impression of readiness to use them right up to global nuclear war. Mastery at the ultimate level helps achieve control at every lower level.

The Soviet Union's size meant that Soviet cities could only be reached from bases in 'the British Isles, North Africa, Egypt, northwestern India and possibly western China'. The policy of encircling the Soviet Union with nuclear bases ensued. However, the US and British governments feared that a nuclear attack would result in the Red Army pouring across Germany into France, Italy, Spain and Portugal. Nevertheless, the nuclear monopoly was played with effect.

## Iran

During World War Two Britain, the USA and the Soviet Union agreed to occupy Iran and withdraw militarily six months after the war. Iranian oil was to be split three ways. Before the end of the war the USA reneged on the agreement by opposing Soviet claims. The Soviets refused to withdraw and the Red Army moved to support independence movements in the Azerbaijan province and the Kurdish Mahabad Republic.

Truman summoned Soviet ambassador Gromyko in March 1946 and told him if the Red Army did not leave Iran in 48 hours, 'We're going to drop it on you'. The Red Army withdrew and British and US troops stood guard while the Shah's forces destroyed the independent republics.



Victim of radiation burns

## Berlin

US and British imperialism saw Berlin as a forward base from which to destabilise Soviet-held territory. The Soviet Union blockaded the city on 24 June 1948. Four days later Truman announced the despatch of 60 'atomic capable' B-29 bombers. It was a bluff. The Pentagon produced a string of plans to 'atomic blitz' the Soviet Union. Nuclear war planners attempted to acclimatise the media to the use of atomic bombs saying they were not so different to other weapons.

Plans were drawn up to occupy the Soviet Union using White Russian exiles as a puppet government. The country would be dismembered, with the Baltic and Muslim states and possibly the Ukraine being permanently sliced off, never again to challenge US dominance.

During 1949 the crisis stalemated and the USA, Britain and Soviet Union moved towards a recognition of a *de facto* status quo division of Europe East and West. The US government considered the nuclear threat to have been successful.

## Korea

On 3 September 1949 the USA discovered that the Soviet Union had exploded its own nuclear bomb. Mao Ze Dong declared the People's Republic of China on 1 October. US war planners went into apoplexy; new long-range B-52s would drop bombs on the Soviet Union as the bombs came off the production line. They rushed to build a hydrogen bomb, 1,000 times more powerful than the atomic bomb.

Horrified at the prospect of global annihilation Oppenheimer visited Truman, 'Mr President, I feel I have blood on my hands'. Truman reached into his top pocket, removed a neatly folded handkerchief and offered it saying, 'Would you like to wipe them?' When Oppenheimer left, Truman turned to Under Secretary Dean Acheson and told him not to bring Oppenheimer around anymore, 'Blood on his hands! Dammit, he hasn't half as much blood on his hands as I have! You just don't go around bellyaching about it'.

Oppenheimer was branded a security risk and isolated during the McCarthy era. Strict security surrounded those working on the hydrogen bomb. They tended to be fervent anti-communists and fascist types.

War broke out in Korea in June 1950. Chinese troops were deployed alongside their Korean comrades. In July Truman secretly authorised the shipping of atomic bomb components to England. The first time nuclear weapons crossed the Atlantic. On 30 November Truman publicly acknowledged he was considering using atomic weapons against the Chinese. US nuclear bombers flew dummy runs over North Korea.

11 February 1953 US National Security Council minutes state that President Eisenhower 'then expressed the view that we should consider the use of tactical atomic weapons on the Kaesong area'. A March Joint Chiefs of Staff memo reads, 'The efficacy of atomic weapons in achieving greater results at less cost...points to the desirability of re-evaluating the policy which now restricts the use of atomic weapons in the Far East'. The minutes of the 20 May 1953 meeting of the Joint Chiefs of Staff with the President state that Eisen-

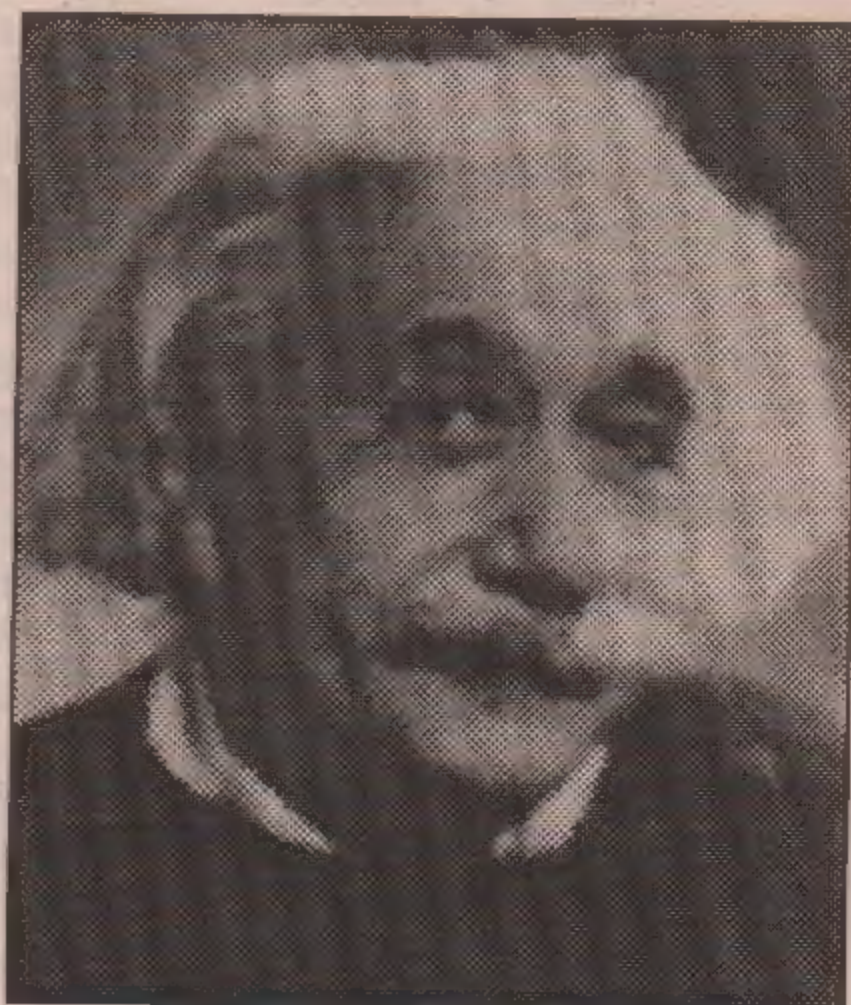
hower was persuaded to use nuclear weapons in Korea if negotiations failed.

Eisenhower's Vice President Richard Nixon believed that nuclear threats were decisive in ending the Korean war and maintaining the partition. Nixon waved the nuclear 'diplomatic stick' over Vietnam, over China during the Indo-Pakistan war and over the Middle East. The threat was used at Suez 1956, Cuba 1962, Jordan 'Black September' 1970, Iran 1980 etc. Once it was the Soviet Union that would be turned into a 'smoking, radiating ruin'. This year it was North Korea's turn to be threatened with becoming 'a charcoal briquette' (Colin Powell).



Hiroshima after the bomb

The collapse of the socialist bloc, growing inter-imperialist rivalry, the variety of nuclear weapons in stock, the development of 'shield' technology, the prospect of nuclear victory being just hours away, the era of push-button wars where 'civilised' men commit massacres they never see, the nuclear tests - all tell us that the nuclear apocalypse is close to hand.



Albert Einstein:

We must warn people of the danger again and again

Einstein added his mighty voice to those scientists who campaigned for world disarmament and for the use of science to satisfy human needs, not destruction. The shockwaves of Hiroshima reverberate down the 20th century. The fight to end a system that can protect itself only by threatening worldwide destruction is now more vital than ever. We can begin by joining those who are already campaigning against nuclear tests in the Pacific.

Trevor Rayne



Frank Field's book, *Making Welfare Work*, must count as about the

nastiest product of New Labour. Never mind that its recommendations are not yet official Labour policy: ROBERT CLOUGH argues that it expresses a nineteenth century Poor Law Guardian view which is completely consistent with New Labour thinking.

Already the book has been welcomed by Will Hutton who concedes that although 'it's a far cry from the idealism of the Webbs and far less redistributive, in the harsh climate of the 1990s it may be the best that can be done - and the most durable'. Hutton's support is not surprising, for the book fleshes out the framework he provides in his book *The State We're In* (see review by David Yaffe in FRFI 124).

# New Labour Old Poor Law

**T**he mass unemployment of the last fifteen years, and the increasing levels of under-employment expressed in the rise of part-time and temporary work, have led to an explosion in expenditure on state welfare. In real terms, it has doubled since 1979, rising from £45.4 billion at 1993/94 prices to just under £90 billion today, despite no less than 17 measures to cut it. These have included:

- Ending the index-linking of pensions to wages, generating an annual saving estimated at £4 billion per annum;
- Removing benefit from 16 and 17 year olds;
- Reducing eligibility for unemployment benefits from 12 months to six months;
- Savagely cutting eligibility for disability allowances.

Since 1979, supplementary benefit/income support has fallen from 26 per cent of average male earnings for a married couple to 19 per cent, and from 16 per cent to 12 per cent for a single person. These almost continuous cuts have plunged 16 million people into poverty, 4 million of them children. It is the price the working class have had to pay to allow the middle class to maintain their privileged and affluent existence. Nearly 10 million people are now dependent on means-tested welfare. These include 1.9 million unemployed who have exhausted their unemployment benefit and their 1.4 million dependants of whom 800,000 are children. It also includes one million single parents and their 1.8 million children. The total of 2.6 million children are the majority of the 4 million who live in households with less than half the average income.

Piecemeal cuts in benefit levels may have limited the extent of the rise in state welfare expenditure but they are now a quite inadequate solution as far as British capitalism is concerned. Either there will have to be some dramatic restructuring in state welfare, or the middle class will have to pay more taxes. The latter is electorally impossible for either New Labour or the Tories, and if New Labour forms the next government it will have to provide a solution to this problem. This is exactly what Frank Field provides in his book. Taking Hutton's position as his starting point, he has developed a plan to slash state welfare for the working class, especially its poorest sections, whilst maintaining a welfare cushion for the middle class.

## Welfare for the middle class

So what are Field's proposals? In essence, they involve an insurance system with facilities to enable those who wish to contribute more to receive enhanced benefits in return. This fund would not be in any way redistributory: 'A commitment must be given, as part of a stakeholder's welfare, that any redistribution will be clear and above board. It should come from general taxation and not by sleight of hand on the part of fund administrators'. There would be two new semi-privatised institutions:

- A National Insurance Corporation - independent of the government, running the entire system of unemployment, pension and sickness benefits, deciding on the level of both contributions and benefits. There would be a core minimum benefit, above which entitlement would depend on the size of contribution. For those who cannot pay contributions because they are part-time workers or carers, there would be a system of top-up or credits paid out of taxation.
- A Private Pensions Corporation - collecting and investing additional compulsory pension contributions

well-off section of the population, and it needs to be compensated with a graduated welfare scheme. When times are good, such people can pay a higher level of contribution, safe in the knowledge that it will not be 'redistributed' to the working class but will come back to them in the form of higher benefit levels in hard times. Throughout the book Field's concern lies with the 'taxpayer', a euphemism for the middle class whose interests he is out to protect, and to whose naked greed he makes constant appeal.

This nationalisation of inequality lies at the heart of Will Hutton's position; he himself argued that the middle class:

'must have good reasons for accepting the progressive taxation upon which a welfare system depends. They need to get enough out of the system directly in terms of provision and indirectly in terms of social cohesion to make them support the principle of universal welfare to which they are disproportionately heavy contributors. That requires well designed and high-quality welfare services that meet their needs as well.'

Field's development of these ideas has the added advantage that the working class will have to stump up for these middle class comforts, since there is an unspoken assumption that the ruling class is not going to pay anything extra.

## It's the poor who get the blame: attacking welfare 'fraud'

Part of the money to pay for middle class welfare will come from attacking 'fraud'. Field's views on this subject are worthy of Peter Lilley or of any tabloid newspaper. He talks ominously about 'icebergs of fraud' of which only the tips are visible; he argues that 'a large number of claimants draw benefit and work full-time', and that 'fraud officers find it massively difficult to track down these claimants' because 'the claimants are usually adept at giving (them) the slip'. To this he adds 'the fraud of single mothers living with boyfriends working part time'. He

creates a picture where 'lying, cheating and deceit are all rewarded handsomely by a welfare system which costs an average £15 a day for each taxpayer'.

**claimants suspected of working full time 'should be required to register three or four times a day. At each registration claimants would be told the time of their next appointment.'**

His conclusion? That welfare fraud 'probably runs into many billions of pounds each year', and that the chief offenders are:

- Those claiming benefit whilst failing to report cash earnings;
- Fictitious desertions of the male partner in the family;
- Single mothers cohabiting with boyfriends, each claiming separately;
- Claiming to be unemployed but working full time and drawing benefit.

He portrays a world where millions of people spend their time and effort not in finding useful work but in maximising their benefit income: 'Knowledge of changes in the rules and regulations spreads like bushfire amongst a large proportion of claimants.' In which case they must all have PhDs or at least be cleverer than their parliamentary representatives, because as he later acknowledges, the forms a claimant has to complete to obtain means-tested benefits are so complex that 'baffled claimants regularly turn to their MPs who have little choice but to turn to the high priests of such arcane mysteries in the DSS'. Indeed, in its former guise as the DHSS, it will be well remembered as the Department of Stealth and Total Obscurity.

What then is his conclusion? 'Welfare rules must be reformed so that it is easier for the poor to remain honest'. And let there be no doubt as to how such honesty will be promoted: claimants suspected of working full time 'should be required to register three or four times a day. At each registration claimants would be told the time of their next appointment. Identification cards would be a necessary accompaniment of this reform'. The DSS needs to deploy an 'SAS-type core of officers countering fraud' because 'an effective anti-fraud drive, employing highly qualified, highly intelligent and highly paid staff, would bring a bonus to taxpayers of not merely hundreds of millions of pounds at present, but of literally billions of pounds in saved benefit'.

Yet what is the reality? In 1993/94, means-tested welfare expenditure came to £34.8 billion. If we take Field's figure of 9.8 million claimants of means-tested welfare, then each received a paltry £3,500 per annum in means-tested benefit. Note that this does not include dependants. If there are 'billions of pounds' of fraud, it would merely indicate that the true levels of benefits are even more piti-



An earlier generation of working class children, without welfare benefits, queued for food

over and above the minimum, thereby ensuring a link between size of contributions and future benefits.

For those remaining on tax-financed income support - the long-term unemployed or single parents with families - Field proposes a minimum payment conditional on individuals drawing up their career plans and actively looking for work. Overall, the scheme requires the complete separation of tax and insurance systems, so that '...any redistribution to the lower paid, or to those outside of the labour market, must be done openly, be above board, and be agreed by the voters themselves.'

State welfare then becomes the privilege of the middle class. The arrival of the 'flexible market' has brought new uncertainties to this



# ur: aw

ful. It is not surprising to find that in the East End of London, one third of all households have an income of less than £4,500 per annum – presumably this too is inflated by Field's 'icebergs of fraud'. The fact is that it is impossible to live on a single pension of £65 per week, or on £95 a week if you are a single parent with two children, or on £46 per week if you live on your own.

## It's the poor who get the blame: attacking single parents.

Field's lack of scruples is expressed in his pathological obsession for what he calls the 'never-married single parent'. Asking his reader to imagine what it is like never to have known one's father he continues:

'What does it mean for hundreds and thousands and possibly, by now, millions of young people that their mother has had a number of other partners, most of whom gave her children – their step-brothers and sisters? What message is being put across to children when much of family life is spent eating in front of a TV screen while a succession of different boyfriends occupy the seats behind them?'

His view is that any welfare system needs to have values, and his system will have explicit values that lead him to ask 'is it right that young, never-married mothers should gain additional income support premiums when few if any voters think such behaviour is acceptable, let alone rewardable?' And because he thinks it isn't, he would not feel it appropriate to include single-parent families in his new insurance scheme since it 'would not command much political support... Insurance benefit should not be offered where choice (ie to have a child) may lead to eligibility.' When we remember that Field is also a fervent opponent of abortion, and a supporter of the Child Support Agency, we can see that he is in truth a woman-hater.

## It's the poor who get poorer...

Field wants the middle class to have their cake and eat it. For those such as lone parents or the long-term unemployed who remain on tax-financed benefit, the results will be desperate. Since it will take two decades for this new scheme to come to fruition, he is convinced that 'moving away from an exclusive debate about poverty is therefore a first priority'. Why? Because 'any redirected or new expen-

diture must go towards extending the coverage of national insurance benefits, not in raising what has been called the poverty line itself.' So the conclusion is that tax-financed benefits are not to be raised at all.

In rejecting any pressure to raise the 'relative value of income support' to compensate for the fall in living standards of the bottom 10 per cent, he asks 'can such a commitment be delivered'. His answer? 'I do not believe it can. Nor do I believe it is in the long-term interests of most claimants for such a campaign to be successful. Its inevitable result is for means-tested welfare not merely to survive but to swell to even greater importance. A strategy which enables people to see that their own efforts will be rewarded by increased living standards is the alternative'. A view worthy of any Dickensian capitalist such as the appalling Mr Bounderby in *Hard Times*.

When he argues the need to appeal to people's 'altruism', it is not the 'taxpayer' he has in mind, but the working class, and in particular the millions of women who have to work part-time in temporary jobs in order to survive; those whom New Labour will not promise a minimum wage. But Field has something for them which will bring out their altruistic best: benefits must not be too steeply graduated at the lowest level since 'to pay too high a level of benefits to part-time workers will create a disincentive problem. Moreover, such payments might well undermine the appeal to fairness (!) which the scheme must seek to engender.'

As for the view that such proposals 'will result in the very poorest gain-

is charlatany. His 'flexible labour market' is one of endless career opportunities for the middle class, not the drudge of atrociously-paid, part-time temporary work that is the lot of so many women and now increasingly of men.

At a time when figures show that of 3.8 million Restart interviews in 1994/95, only 49,493 led to jobs, his concept of 'life rafts back to work' becomes just another euphemism, this time for oppression. As if to drive the point home, he emphasises that 'the "actively seeking work" rules will continue to operate for the unemployed.' Indeed, he wants more – a 'battery of controls' on the unemployed, such as 'reporting regularly a number of times each day to

a Jobcentre, or more effectively still, agreeing to become full-time members of a Job Club searching for work'.

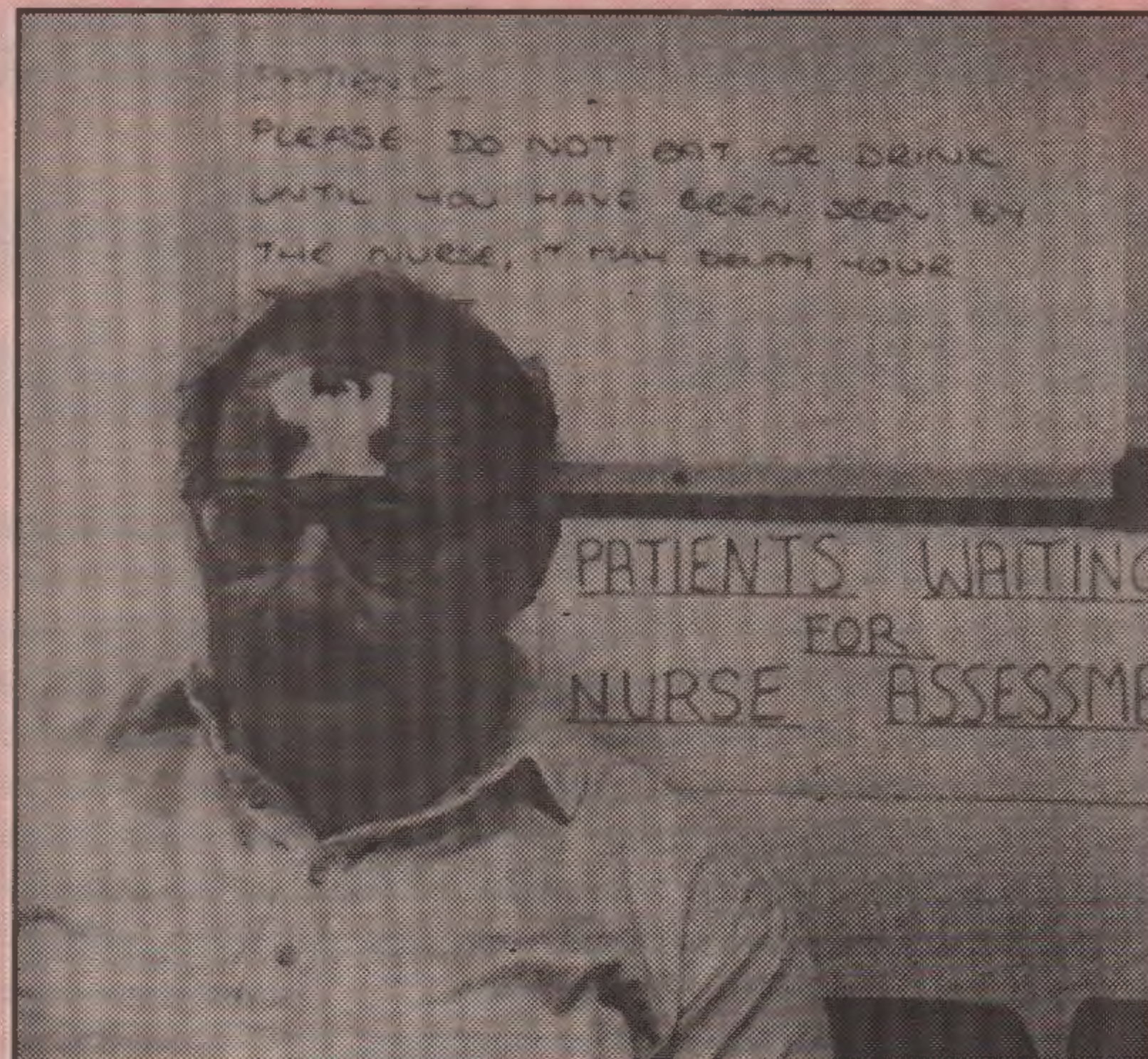
## ...and the middle class who get richer

Throughout the book Field counterposes the interests of hard-put-upon 'taxpayers' to those of an increasingly fraudulent and dishonest 'underclass'. He is anxious to ensure that whatever was taken from the working class to pay the middle class during the 1980s should not be returned: as he points out, 'there is no general groundswell amongst middle class groups for redistribution of wealth to the poor, particularly in the aftermath of the Thatcher years.' And this at a time when even Labour's own Commission on Social Justice estimates that whilst the top 10 per cent of households pay 32 per cent of their income in tax, the poorest 10 per cent pay 43 per cent in taxation.

In 1977, Field co-authored a book *To Him Who Hath*. This was before he became an MP, and when he had a left-wing reputation. Apart from a sustained critique of the notion of extensive welfare fraud, he explains that 'much of the welfare state's income maintenance proposals are paid for by working people themselves, and that the poorest workers are called on to pay a significant part of their income to help finance... their own benefits', concluding that 'the financing of the welfare state has added to the growing regressiveness of the British tax system.'

But that was a long time ago. Now his concern lies with the middle class, with the modern Mr Bounderby, and his view of the working class is that they are there to pay for middle class privilege. His book may have one merit: it leaves no doubt as to who will be the beneficiaries of a New Labour government. It also makes plain that for millions of working class people, New Labour offers only more drudgery and repression.

Frank Field: *Making Welfare Work – Reconstructing Welfare for the Millennium*, Institute of Community Studies, 18 Victoria Park Square, London E2 9PF. Price: £9.95



# NATIONAL HEALTH UNEQUAL TREATMENT

There would be 42,000 fewer deaths each year if the death rate for manual workers was the same as that for non-manual workers. That is the equivalent of two Jumbo jets packed with passengers crashing each week and killing all aboard. A child from an unskilled family is twice as likely to die before the age of 15 than one from a professional family. Angina, a form of heart disease, is twice as common amongst middle aged manual workers as compared with non-manual workers. And so it goes on. *Tackling Inequalities in Health* is an update on the Black report of 1980, and shows that the incidence of all forms of chronic diseases as well as the death rate is higher the poorer you are. Since then, matters have only got worse with the rise in mass unemployment. Working class people live on average 8 years less than the wealthiest. The most recent studies have shown that this gap started to widen from 1981 for the first time in decades.

Reactionaries have blamed individual behaviour for this in the same way that Frank Field blames the individual behaviour of never-married mothers for their poverty. However, research proves conclusively that it is social conditions that matter. For instance, the so-called Whitehall study which has followed the lives of 17,000 civil servants since 1967, has found that there is a strong correlation between grade and incidence of heart disease for both smokers and non-smokers alike. Furthermore, working class people have always been forced to take unhealthy opiates – whether it be drink, cigarettes or drugs – in order to cope with an otherwise wretched existence.

Whilst Benzeval et al write about the inequalities of health, Yates' subject is the inequality of the treatment of health, and access to it.\* He exposes the rapid expansion of private routine surgery which involves three out of every four surgical consultants. Amongst other things, he shows that

- 20 per cent of all routine surgery in 1991/92 was carried out on private patients, a figure rising to 40 per cent for some operations in 1994;
- The average waiting time for a private outpatient consultation is 2-3 weeks compared to 4-6 months in the NHS;
- 96 per cent of all private consulta-

tions take place within one month of a referral; only 7 per cent of NHS consultations meet this deadline;

- Consultant surgeons carry out about five operations per week in the NHS, and two each week in the private sector;
- Consultant surgeons spend 20 to 30 per cent of their working week on private practice; for consultant anaesthetists this rises to 50 per cent;
- 30 per cent of all hip operations are now done privately. In London in 1992, 40 per cent of all coronary artery bypass operations were done privately;
- The number of private healthcare beds rose from 6,671 in 1981 to 11,250 in 1991 whilst the number of operations doubled – from 344,000 to 680,000.

It costs about £70 to have a private consultation – peanuts for the middle class, but more than a week's income for a pensioner or someone on income support. It therefore provides a fast track for middle class people to get on a standard NHS waiting list. It also provides opportunities for many consultants to double their NHS salary of £45,000. Yates exposes a situation where the length of NHS waiting lists is correlated with the extent of private practice and the income surgeons derive from it, and where illnesses having the longest waiting time in the NHS are the mainstay of the private sector workload.

Yates – who used to lead the NHS Waiting List Initiative between 1989 and 1991 – concludes that 'the poor are more prone to illness and early death, and it is the poor who have to wait longest for treatment.' It is perhaps not surprising that when New Labour published its NHS policy, it did not mention the issue of private healthcare. Doubtless they will come to see the virtues of a graduated national health insurance scheme which gives preferential access to 'non-urgent' surgery, particularly as Will Hutton has already suggested something similar.

Robert Clough

\* *Tackling Inequalities in Health*, ed Benzeval, Judge and Whitehead, Kings Fund, £14.95

\* *Private Eye, Heart and Hip*, John Yates, Churchill Livingstone, £9.95



# Cuban communists defend the people

In 1989 Cuban society was plunged into a profound crisis following the collapse of the Soviet Union, its main trading partner and source of economic support. Gross Domestic Product fell by 34 per cent from 19.5bn pesos in 1989 to 12.87bn in 1994. The results for the Cuban people have been incredibly painful – severe shortages of food, of all subsistence goods, basic utilities, fuel, medical supplies, educational material, newsprint, spare parts for public transport and all spheres of industry. The suffering and hardship is additionally compounded by the US blockade.

Despite these harsh conditions, as EDDIE ABRAHAMS shows, Cuban communists are determinedly fighting for the survival of Cuban socialism, convinced that 'with or without us, another progressive, revolutionary wave will sweep the world...' In this struggle they are 'defending certain principles that are of tremendous value at a time of confusion and opportunism.'

In the face of what has been a catastrophic economic collapse, the Cuban Communist Party had two choices. Its leading sectors, following the example of its Eastern European and Soviet counterparts, could have gone along the path of capitalist restoration, privatisation and neo-liberalism. Whilst impoverishing the majority such an option would nevertheless have secured significant privilege for a new ruling class in alliance with imperialism. Instead the Cuban communists have opted for a course of action in which:

'Our problem consisted of what to do in order to survive, and at the same time, to preserve all the social advances that the Revolution had achieved for the people.'

'From a social point of view, we made huge changes (in the Revolution); there is no need for new social changes in our country, because what it comes down to, precisely, is the preservation of the social changes we have already made and the social achievements of the revolution, which must not be lost during this special period.'

Such is the political starting point of Cuban communists as they attempt to adjust to a hostile world capitalist market, with joint ventures with imperialist multinationals, legalisation of dollar holdings in Cuba and the extension of private enterprise in certain sectors of the economy. Cuba, a small nation of some 11 million people, has neither the raw materials nor the technological forces to survive in isolation from the world economy. With the collapse of the socialist bloc it has no option but to seek such resources from the capitalist world market. A self-sufficient, enclosed economy is out of the question. The Cuban people have to relate to the world market or go under:

'We have made a major opening, in the first place, to foreign investment...there was a great deal of potential development that we had neither the technology nor the capital nor the means to undertake...this process gathered greater pace after the crisis in the socialist camp and the disappearance of the USSR... We have no other alternative.'

But unlike other regimes in the Third World, the Cubans are determined to retain state control of the key sectors of the economy. This is the only means of ensuring the realisation of their political aim – defence of the social gains of the revolution. They



The role of Cuban youth is central to the future of the revolution

are not making a virtue of necessity. Instead of aping many an ex-communist by singing hymns of praise to capitalism and the market, they are intent on avoiding subordination to the multinationals: 'We don't want to sell off our country, that is not our intention, nor are we prepared to sell off the country...'

'...We have been decentralising trade; nevertheless some of our major foreign trade enterprises are still centralised... We are not selling companies, we are creating joint ventures... We are not in a privatisation programme, we are in a programme to set the economy in motion.'

The first results of Cuba's venture into the world capitalist market has seen a significant influx of foreign capital which reached \$1.5bn in 1994. In 1990 there were only 20 joint ventures with capitalist firms, today there are 207, with 172 in the economic sector and 35 in tourism. Companies from 57 countries, but primarily from Spain, Mexico and Canada, are involved in tourism, petroleum, mining, telecommunications, cement, textiles and food production. Tourism is now challenging sugar as a hard currency earner and is expected to earn some \$1bn this year in contrast to \$850 in 1994.

These measures have led to a degree of stabilisation in the economy. In 1994 hard currency earnings increased by 15.6 per cent and the trade deficit fell to less than \$642m from nearly \$900m in 1993. For the first time since 1990 Gross Domestic Product showed a slight improvement, growing by 0.7 per cent in 1994 compared to a reduction of some 14.9 per cent the previous year. The hardships and strains of the 'special

period' are by no means over. But such developments have enabled the Cuban state to continue its provision of essential medical, educational, welfare and food supplies to the entire population.

## The challenge ahead

However, whatever the subjective

intentions of the Cuban communists, the changes forced onto them since 1989 are replete with dangers for the working class. Foreign capital, by its very presence in Cuba, inevitably gives rise to privileged sectors who will see their future with capitalism not socialism. The influx of foreign capital will inevitably produce social forces hostile to Cuban socialism. Already significant social inequalities have appeared as those with access to dollars become wealthy whilst workers in the state sector suffer privation. Black marketeers and employees of foreign companies live better than doctors, teachers and state workers providing essential welfare for all Cubans. Dollar owners, uniting with corrupt sectors of the state and party apparatus, will strive to bring down socialism in order to advance their own narrow interests.

Within the confines of Cuba there is little prospect of long term coexistence between Cuban socialism and foreign capital. They have diametrically opposed interests. Whilst Cuban communists have been forced to seek out foreign capital to defend the social gains of the revolution, capitalist firms enter Cuba exclusively for profit-making. Any social, political or economic restrictions on their hunger for profit is considered as an evil obstacle to be removed. Foreign capital will not be satisfied with joint-ventures. It will demand total privatisation of all sectors of the economy and an end to all welfare and social provision which restricts the growth of profit. To achieve its ends foreign capital will have the social base for counter-revolution among the strata being created by its very presence in Cuba.

Whilst the economic situation

improves, political and social conflict is bound to intensify, as counter-revolutionary trends seek to advance their cause. Only strong working class organisation and control over these elements can prevent counter-revolution. To this end the Cuban Communist Party, which in contrast to those of latter-day Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, actually represents substantial sections of the working class and peasantry, is engaged in an energetic campaign to extend working class participation in political and social life. Within the Communist Party and in local and national politics democracy is being extended and particular effort is being made to encourage the greater participation of young people, women and black people in leading roles in Cuba. Recognising the central role of youth for the future of the revolution, Cuba's communist youth organ-

isation is leading the struggle to consolidate the revolution among young people.

The challenge facing the Cuban working class is enormous. The international situation is bleak. In the opinion of Fidel Castro:

'Never before has humanity witnessed such an upsurge in the power of reaction and the empire. This doesn't mean that will be eternal – far from it, for the empire is beset by all kinds of contradictions. But this is the time we are in.'

This is the context in which international solidarity for Cuba must be seen. The Cuban people urgently need support from all corners of the world. They are fighting not just for themselves but for the very idea of socialism, for its principles and its dreams.

All quotes from *Granma International*.

## ROCK AROUND THE BLOCKADE

It is clear that today more than ever, the defence of Cuba demands not only opposition to the crippling US blockade, but a principled and untiring political campaign in defence of the Cuban revolution itself, and the hope it offers the millions of oppressed in the world today bearing the brunt of the capitalist crisis. FRFI's Rock around the Blockade initiative, organised in collaboration with the Cuban Union of Young Communists (UJC) offers such a campaign.

FRFI initiated Rock around the Blockade – which is open to all who support the Cuban revolution and oppose the US blockade – to build understanding of and solidarity with the achievements of socialism in Cuba and promote active, non-sectarian campaigning. We are rais-

ing money in support of a youth centre in Ciego de Avila in central Cuba, and organising a work brigade to visit Ciego in December.

Over the last few months, we took part in the Container for Cuba Appeal organised by the Cuba Solidarity Campaign, which culminated on 17 June with a rally in north London to load and send off two 40ft containers filled with educational, medical and work supplies, collected by local groups and activists since January. Despite the initial reluctance of the national executive to support a material aid campaign, the Appeal has proved the most successful and dynamic CSC campaign to date, raising over £200,000 of aid, drawing in new people and generating enthusiasm and a sense of participa-



Rock Around the Blockade supporters help load the Containers for Cuba at Hackney Town Hall





Above: Manchester Rock Around the Blockade supporters wearing their t-shirts on a very successful sponsored bike ride to Blackpool. To raise money for the campaign, Rock around the Blockade has produced a high quality, Fruit of the Loom t-shirt. White, with a red and black design of Che Guevara and the words 'Viva Cuba' on the front, and a quote from Che on the back, it is available in L, M and S for only £7. We also produce a Che Guevara badge in the same colours, with the words 'Rage against the US blockade' which costs 50p.

Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ t-shirt(s) (please specify L, M or S) at £7 each and/or \_\_\_\_\_ badges at 50p. I enclose £\_\_\_\_\_ (cheques/POs payable to Rock around the Blockade).

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to Rock around the Blockade, c/o FRFI, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX.

tion amongst activists young and old. The executive has been forced to agree that this will now be an annual campaign.

We have also been active in raising nearly £2,000 towards the £4,000 needed for a sound system for the UJC youth centre in Ciego, with street events in London, Manchester, Brighton and Dundee, stalls at local festivals in Manchester and Lincoln and a magnificent 61-mile sponsored bike ride from Manchester to Blackpool which raised in excess of £600. Our new fundraising t-shirt is also selling well – you can order yours on the form above. In addition to the activities listed below, we will be organising a delegation to hand in petitions to Downing Street during the CSC Week of Action 9-15 October, demanding the British Government vote against the US blockade at the United Nations; a fund-raising benefit with the Bradford-based band *Detrimental*, and a dayschool and rally in late November. Watch this space for further details!

#### Coming events – get involved!

**Manchester:** Saturday 5 August, 11am-1pm, street meeting and stall, Market Street. 7.30pm onwards – social at the Beer House, Rochdale Road. Entrance by

donation. There will be more street meetings, video showings and a social in September, and a sponsored walk on Saturday 1 October – for details of forthcoming events contact Rock around the Blockade, Dept 4, 1 Newton Street, Manchester M1 1WH.

**Lincoln:** campaigners plan to raise £1,200 towards the disco system and brigade. They had a stall at the Labour Party Summer Fair in July and will be holding a sponsored walk on 20 August. A stall is also planned for the Lincoln Peace Festival on 2 September, and a car boot sale for 16 September.

**London:** next planning meeting for anyone interested in getting involved, Saturday 12 August, 3pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1.

Street events: Saturday 5 August, petitioning in Covent Garden, 11.30-2.30. Meet outside Rock Garden; Saturday 19 August, 11.30-2.30, Lewisham, meet by market. Saturday 9 September, Oxford Circus, 12-2pm.

23 September: sponsored bike-ride to Brighton. Entrance fee £10 – waived if more is collected in sponsorship. Contact the campaign for details.

**Brighton:** leafleting at Cuba Solidarity Campaign Festival, 5 August. All afternoon opposite the pier.

# Fighting the propaganda war

It was reported this summer that the US government was actively studying the West German strategy of 'Ostpolitik' and its role in bringing down socialism in the former East Germany – in relation to Cuba. While nominally opposing the 'hardline' Helms-Burton Bill, the Clinton administration will maintain the current blockade, and intensify propaganda and covert operations geared towards the Cuban people. CAT WIENER reports.

The campaign against Cuba includes opening US press bureaux in Cuba, funding material support to anti-communist groups, orchestrating US state-funded student and religious exchanges. An anonymous 'policy-maker' told the *New York Times* in June, 'Eastern European officials told us that these tools made a real difference in bringing down communism.' Alongside this goes, inevitably, the planting of CIA-inspired propaganda masquerading as 'news' in the mainstream press, in a concerted attempt to alienate popular support for the Cuban revolution internationally.

In line with this policy, over the summer months the British press has been full of hostile articles on Cuba. Foremost in the anti-Cuba pack has been Phil Davison, a US-based journalist who supplied a series of articles, ostensibly written from Havana, to *The Independent* in the first week of July. They read like a CIA press release – a mish-mash of politically motivated distortions, insinuations and downright lies.

'Mental hospitals in Cuba,' Davison assures us, 'are full of government critics, not to mention people

with AIDS, whom Mr Castro deems unfit to live among the rest of the population.'

The controversial programme of sanatoria for HIV victims was in fact closed down a year ago. A few have been kept open for the long-term treatment of the chronically ill. Even while they functioned, international observers described them as open, pleasant units where patients who were well enough continued their jobs, had home visits, excursions and counselling, and frequently a better standard of life than those outside. Even Amnesty International, always quick to criticise Cuba's treatment of 'political prisoners', has never suggested they were placed in psychiatric hospitals.

To back up his fictions, Davison cites none other than former Costa Rican president, Oscar Arias, whom he quotes as calling Cuba: 'a gulag... everyone feels a prisoner.' Arias, of course, has long since proved his democratic credentials by allowing the US to oversee the militarisation of Costa Rica through CONDECA, severing all diplomatic ties with Cuba at the behest of the US, and allowing Nicaraguan contras to be trained on Costa Rican land and weapons to be channelled through the country. This neutral observer was, according to Davison, 'shocked at the country's deterioration'. Yet Costa Rica has a higher infant mortality rate than Cuba, three and a half times fewer doctors and three times fewer teachers per head of population, and fewer people with access to safe drinking water; poverty for the majority of Costa Ricans has increased since Arias adopted the neo-liberal Structural Adjustment Programme in the late 1980s. Perhaps Arias, who won a Nobel Peace Prize for brokering an El Salvadorean peace deal in the interests of imperialism, should cast an eye over his own backyard before criticising a country which is amongst the few to have met the World Health Organisation's *Health for All* targets for the year 2000 and is amongst the stars of the most recent UNICEF report ranking countries' progress in terms of human development.

But Davison has few scruples in his search for political allies. He is quick, after all, to hail as a democrat Eloy Gutierrez Menoyo, a counter-revolutionary who fled Cuba for Miami because he was opposed to the socialist turn taken by the revolution and who set up the notorious Alpha-66 terrorist group. This group, dedicated to the overthrow of Castro, continued its activities long after Gutierrez was arrested after returning to Cuba to plot counter-revolution, and boasted in 1981 of no less than 30 acts of sabotage in Cuba in the first six months of that year. Acts of terror by anti-Castro groups have included bombings, arson, hijacking and murder.

And the queues which Davison claims have built up outside the US interests section in Havana are made up of relatives desperate to visit their families in the US but time after time denied visas by the US – which also prevents Cubans living in the States from visiting Cuba. It was US policy which encouraged illegal refugees

while closing off any legal channel that sent thousands to their deaths on homemade rafts in the Florida Straits and it is the US blockade that has brought hunger and hardship to the Cuban people.

When Davison speaks of Cuban exiles attempting to organise protests via radio, does he mean the US state-funded Radio Marti, which contravenes international law on use of air frequencies, and regularly belts out anti-Cuba propaganda, encouraging Cubans to acts of sabotage and hijackings?

41 people were indeed drowned in one such attempted hijacking on 13 July 1994 – in spite of Cuban coastguards efforts to save them. Davison prefers the CIA version – a boat deliberately rammed by Cuban officials, who then looked on callously as people drowned.

Davison's *pièce de resistance*, however, in an article headed 'Suicide still the surest way out of Cuba', is the assertion that the Cuban suicide rate is the highest in the Western hemisphere and double that of the US. What a shame he is unable to quote a source for this juicy piece of propaganda, and has refused to respond to calls from our journalists. The World Health Organisation publishes no figures for suicide rates in Cuba. If his other 'facts' are anything to go by, it is but one more deliberate piece of misinformation.

However, if statistics are wanted, how about these? In 1995 in the US, an average of nine people under the age of 18 are murdered every day. A third of all inner-city children have had someone they know killed by the time they are 15. One in five children live below the poverty line – a rate twice that of any other industrialised country. Eight million children have no health care. An estimated 375,000 drug-exposed infants, including 'crack babies', are born each year. Preventable diseases like measles are on the increase. The US infant mortality rate figure of eight per 1,000 live births masks the reality of a society of gaping inequalities and entrenched racism – the figure for the black population is 18 per 1,000. In Cuba's predominantly black Guantanamo province, this year's figure is 8.4 per 1,000. (US figures from *The State of the World's Children* 1994, UNICEF; *World Health*, 1995).

So let Davison provide some hard evidence for his claims. Otherwise, we have heard it all before. Last January, we were told by the *Observer* that the Cubans sacrifice children to primitive gods and chopped up tourists for their Christmas dinner. This is more garbage from the same sewer. Similar propaganda was launched at East Germany to aid its fall. Today in East Germany, the results of the collapse of communism are clear: unemployment, homelessness, the rise of racism, the closing down of nurseries, the criminalisation of abortion, the abandoning of old people. We cannot allow this to be the fate of the Cuban people. The vicious propaganda peddled by Davison and his ilk is part of a deliberate imperialist offensive against the Cuban revolution, more insidious but no less a threat than the blockade itself.

**Saturday 14 October: CSC national demonstration – 'Hands off Cuba! End the US blockade' Assemble 12 noon, Marble Arch, London to march to Trafalgar Square for rally, via the US Embassy in Grosvenor Square. Unfortunately, in keeping with this year's AGM resolution, the Cuba Solidarity Campaign will not actually be demanding solidarity with the Cuban revolution on this march – in order to build 'broad' support, including businesses who trade with Cuba, MPs etc. Rock around the Blockade is therefore organising a contingent for the march under the banner – Defend socialism! Defend the Cuban Revolution! End the US blockade! Build for it now – If no transport is organised from your area, how about organising a car/minibus/coach yourself?**

Our brigade will be in Cuba between 21 December and 4 January, with the possibility of staying on an extra week, and will cost about £600. There will be an opportunity to work alongside young Cubans, visit hospitals, child care centres etc and meet with Cuban popular organisations. To find out more about the brigade or Rock around the Blockade's activities, return the form below or tel 0171 837 1688. Donations towards the campaign are also very welcome (cheques/POs payable to Rock around the Blockade.)

☐ I would like to come on the December brigade  
☐ I would like to be kept informed of Rock around the Blockade's activities in support of Cuba  
I enclose a donation of \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Tel \_\_\_\_\_

Return to Rock around the Blockade, c/o FRFI, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX



# Irish prisoners – the struggle continues

While Private Lee Clegg walks free after only four years in gaol, the situation of Irish prisoners in English gaols is deteriorating and the struggle for their freedom intensifying both inside and outside the gaols. Five Irish prisoners are on a dirty protest in Whitemoor, demanding an end to the increasingly oppressive restrictions they are being subjected to, and transfers to prisons in Ireland. NICKI JAMESON reports on the plight of Irish POWs in British gaols.



London Sinn Féin demonstrate outside House of Commons on day of Tory leadership election

Supporters of Paul Norney, who is in Frankland Prison, have used Clegg's release to highlight the differences between the two men's treatment. Clegg was convicted of murder, transferred to a prison near his family and released after four years. Norney's most serious conviction was for attempted murder; he has remained in England throughout his sentence and is currently in his 21st year in prison. (He was just 17 when sentenced.) Even though the Lord Chief Justice recom-

mended last year that Paul Norney and the four others convicted with him be released, the Home Office has continued to stall. There are now ten Republican prisoners in English gaols who have been in gaol for 20 years or more.

Republican prisoners are at the sharp end of both the Prison Service's much-heralded drive towards harsher regimes for all prisoners, especially those in high security categories, and the government's attempts to weaken Sinn Féin and the IRA.

The three POWs who were held in the Full Sutton Special Security Unit (SSU) (see FRFI 123) have been recently moved to Whitemoor. On arrival they were told they must sign a contract, agreeing to do prison work and wear prison clothes. They refused and were put in the punishment block, where they are now on a dirty protest and on the blanket. Mairead Uí hAdhmaill told a London press conference that her husband Feilim had the light in his cell kept on 24 hours a day, while Patrick Kelly's cell had no light at all. She said the block was run-down, overcrowded and infested, adding that an American prisoner had recently been moved out after being bitten by a rat.

Whitemoor is the end of the line in the British prison system, the worst place to be, a 'New Generation' top security replacement for the old hell-holes of Dartmoor and Parkhurst. Opened in 1991, it was designed especially to serve such a purpose but, echoing the history of the US' notorious control unit prison at Marion, Illinois, (now superseded by the new 'Supermax' at Florence, Colorado) the full control regime was not introduced immediately. Instead the gaol was gradually screwed down and resultant outbreaks of resistance (such as the work-strike of 1992 and 'mutiny' of 1993) used as a justification for bringing in further restrictions. The attempted escape from the Whitemoor SSU in 1994 was cynically exploited to accelerate this process still further, under the guise of 'tightening security'.

Whitemoor is now at boiling point, with violence increasing all around on the wings and reports from the punishment block of a never-ending catalogue of abuses of human rights, ranging from systematic denial of access to radios, newspapers and telephones, to gratuitous physical assaults.

In recent months there has been a series of protests by Whitemoor prisoners, including mass sit-downs on the exercise yard in protest at intrusive searches of visitors, pro-

posals to install microphones in the High Risk visiting room and other repressive measures. The response has been lock-downs and the ghosting of prisoners to other gaols on 28-day 'lay-downs'. In June there were also a number of fires on C wing. Until the POWs began their protest, the only event inside Whitemoor to attract even muted media interest was an attack on a prison officer with hot fat.

INLA prisoners, Liam Heffernan and Martin McMonagle, are also on dirty protest in Whitemoor. Fearful that the action would spread to other gaols, the Home Office swiftly effected the transfer of two other INLA prisoners, who had been due to join the protest, from Full Sutton to Maghaberry in the north of Ireland.

The six prisoners involved in the attempted escape from Whitemoor are still being held in the oppressive Category A unit at Belmarsh prison in south London where they are, once again, in struggle against the imposition of 'closed visits'.

Only those who have sat and talked to their loved ones through a glass screen can actually know and understand the degradation behind the expression 'closed visits'. In state revenge for the Whitemoor escape, all 12 prisoners who the Prison Service currently classifies as 'Category A Exceptional High Risk' were told that all visits, including legal ones, would now be conducted under closed conditions. Even the High Court was shocked at the idea a prisoner must speak to his solicitor through glass and wire-mesh and ordered the governor of Belmarsh to back down on that aspect, but social visits remain closed for these, mainly Irish Republican, prisoners. 'Ordinary' High Risk Category A prisoners (and this includes all other Republican POWs held in England) suspect they may be next in line for this attack on their rights, with the remainder of Category A prisoners not far behind. Any attempt to introduce such measures will certainly be met with concerted resistance.

• London Saoirse is organising the following events in support of Irish prisoners in English gaols:

**Sunday 6 August** – motorcade to Whitemoor. Assemble 10am Archway Tavern, London N19. Picket of prison 1-3pm.

**Thursday 31 August** – contingent at rally to mark a year of the ceasefire, Trafalgar Sq, London WC2, 7pm.

**Friday 1 September** – fundraising benefit at Haringey Irish Centre,

Pretoria Road, N19, 8pm-1am, £6, music from the Blarney Pilgrims, special guest speakers.

**Saturday 2 September** – conference to discuss the way forward for the campaign, Caxton House, St John's Way, London N19, 1-6pm, all welcome.

For further information contact London Saoirse, PO Box 3923, London, NW5 1RA; open meetings are held fortnightly on Thursdays at Camden Irish Centre, Murray Street, NW1; there is a picket of Downing Street on the first Sunday of every month 12-1pm.

The full list of Irish POWs in England is:

HMP Whitemoor, Longhill Road, March, Cambs, PE15 0PR: Feilim O hAdhmaill, Patrick Kelly (EN1194), Michael O'Brien (BT3782), Jan Taylor (EN1977), Nicholas Mullen (MR0639), Brendan Dowd (758662), Liam Heffernan (EN1774) (INLA), Martin McMonagle (INLA), Liam Quinn (49930).

HMP Belmarsh, Western Way, Thamesmead, London, SE28 0EB: Paul (Dingus) Magee (BT3783), Liam McCotter (LB83693), Liam O'Duibhir (MT2485), Danny McNamee (L481616), Peter Sherry (B75880). [Danny McNamee was framed by the British state and is campaigning against his conviction. Andy Russell (JA0223), who is not a Republican prisoner, was also involved in the Whitemoor escape and is also held in Belmarsh.]

HMP Frankland, Finchale Avenue, Brasside, Durham, DH1 5YD: Patrick Hayes (EN1976), Joe McKenny (L46486), Pat McGlynn (EN1946), Stephen Nordone (758563), Thomas Jack (EN3177), Vince Donnelly (274064), Sean McNulty (CL3440), Harry Duggan (338638), Paul Norney (863532). [Stephen Nordone's birthday is on 2 August; he has been in English gaols for over 20 years. Tommy Jack's birthday is 2 September and Vince Donnelly's 25 September.]

HMP Full Sutton, Moor Lane, York, YO4 1PS: Derek Doherty (EN3887), Noel Gibson (879225), Hugh Doherty (338636), Joe O'Connell (338635), Eddie Butler (338637), Sean Kinsella (758661), Vincent Wood (EN1049), Denis Kinsella (EN1944). [Vincent Wood's birthday is on 7 August; the Appeal Court has recently ordered that his case be retried.]

We encourage FRFI readers to send cards to all the prisoners, especially those involved in the protests.

## Strangeways escape trial verdict

On 21 June David Bowen was found guilty of escaping from prison custody, and not guilty of assault causing actual bodily harm against prison officers accompanying him from Hull prison to Manchester Crown Court where, in December 1992, he was facing charges arising from the 1990 Strangeways prison revolt.

David represented himself at the escape trial, which lasted eight days at Nottingham Crown Court, and attempted to establish a defence of duress, ie that the brutality and persecution he received from prison officers at northern gaols in the wake of the Strangeways uprising was so severe it left him with no option but to escape. To this end he called both witnesses to specific events in Preston and Hull prisons and a wide range of general witnesses who gave evidence about the prison system. These included current and ex-pris-

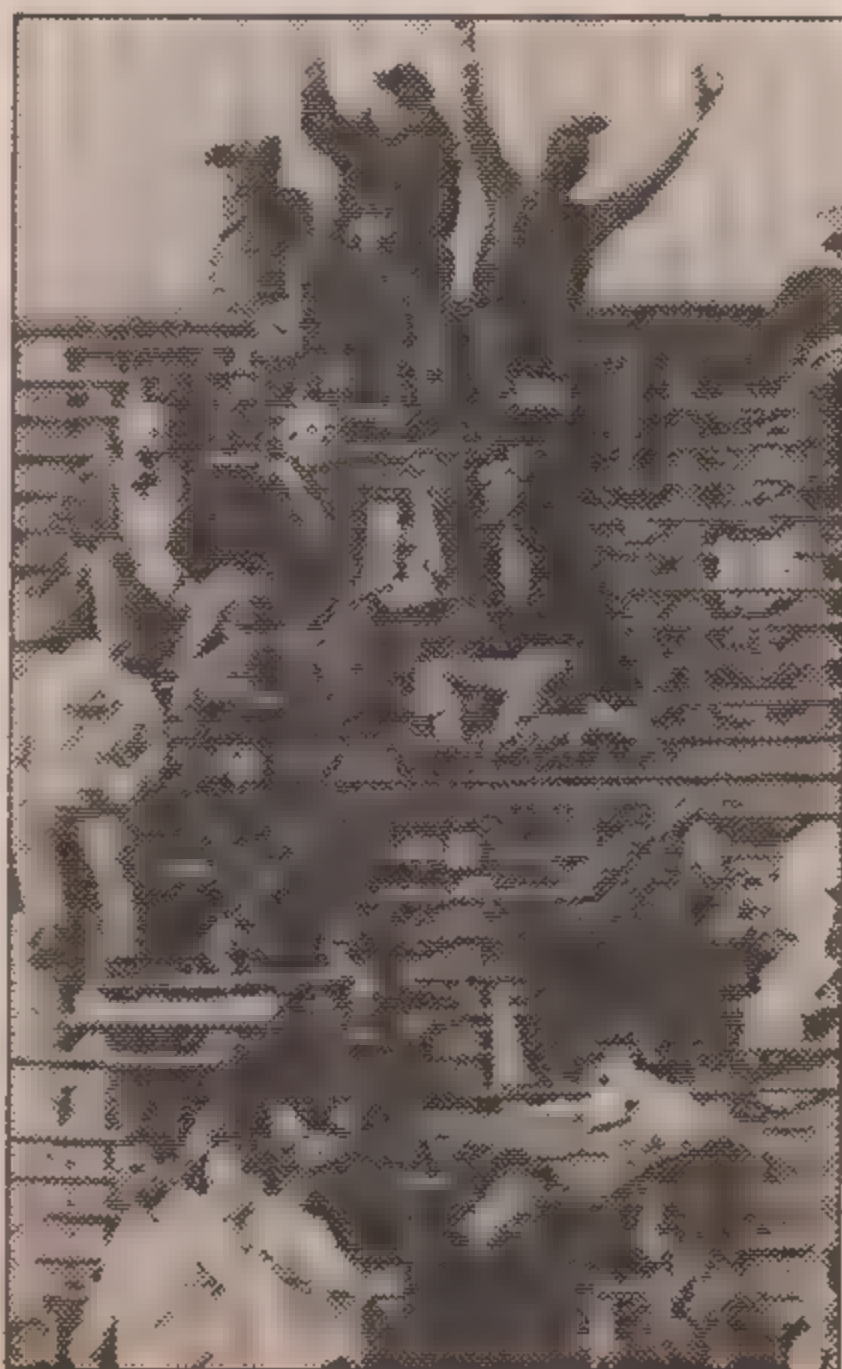
oners, representatives of FRFI and *Taking Liberties* and two former Strangeways prison officers.

On the first day of the trial 30 supporters demonstrated outside the court in solidarity with David. Despite the judge's attempts to have us arrested for contempt of court, we leafleted members of the public and displayed placards saying 'Free David Bowen – end retribution for Strangeways!'

David was held in Lincoln prison throughout the trial. On the evening of the fourth day he was placed on 'Good Order and Discipline' and moved to the gaol's segregation unit. This was undoubtedly a deliberate move to increase the pressure on him in the second week of the trial.

David was sentenced to one year's imprisonment for the escape, bringing his total sentence to 13 years. This autumn he will appeal against

the nine-year sentence he received for conspiracy to commit grievous bodily harm against the prison officers who were attempting to retake Strangeways on the third day of the revolt.



## Strangeways 1990: a serious disturbance

by Nicki Jameson and Eric Allison,

with a foreword

by Michael Mansfield QC.

Photographs by Ged Murray

ISBN 0 905400 18 6 192pp Paperback Price £7.95

'... this powerful analytical book contains a story that has to be told – and must be read.' *Inside Time*, the national newspaper for prisoners

'... an excellent account of the Strangeways "riot" and its ramifications ... rigorously researched, very well written, professionally produced ...' *City Life* magazine

'... a long overdue insiders' account of [this] historic event. Based as it is on interviews with the prisoners involved, it makes gripping reading. Importantly, it also puts the uprising into context with accounts of Strangeways' history, the wider British prison system and previous revolts against it ... You have to read this book.' *Class War*

I would like to order \_\_\_\_\_ copies of *Strangeways 1990: a serious disturbance* at £7.95 + £1 p&p each and enclose £ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_

Return to Larkin Publications, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX



## Deaths in custody

### Self-inflicted deaths in prison 1 May to 7 July:

Gary Allott, 43, HMP Hull  
Lungile Simelane, 27, Holloway  
Kenneth Metcalf, 19, Low Newton  
Paul Snooks, 32, Belmarsh  
Terry Stebbings, 55, Long Lartin  
Martin Jones, 43, Downview  
Paul Shaw, 26, Liverpool  
Daniel Poynter, 32, Haverigg  
Owen Harries, 30, Exeter  
Kelly Holland, 17, Cornton Vale  
Arlene Elliot, 17, Cornton Vale  
Michael Edwards, 25, Leeds

Information from Inquest, Alexandra National House, 330 Seven Sisters Road, London, N4 2PJ; 0181 802 7430. We plan to list deaths in prison over the preceding two months in each forthcoming issue of FRFI, as well as deaths in police custody, of which there were 25 in the first four months of this year, and murders committed on the streets by the police, such as that of David Ewin, shot dead on 28 February, or Brian Douglas, batoned to death in May.

### Terry Stebbings

The recent death of Terry Stebbings, who committed suicide in Long Lartin on 2 June, aged 55, is an enormous loss to those of us who have struggled and resisted in prison, and a terrible personal blow to prisoners like myself who were fortunate to have met and known Terry. The suffering inflicted upon prisoners who resist has always bred a unique form of comradeship and Terry's death will be deeply wounding to those who struggled alongside him.

Terry Stebbings was an intrinsically good human being who rebelled naturally against a corrupt and brutal prison system and offered his solidarity to other prisoners willingly and instinctively. His death was, in a way, inevitable, because as a lifer with a long record of defiance, it was unlikely that the authorities would ever have countenanced his release. He was, therefore, confronted with a cruelly stark choice: submit or

remain imprisoned until death. He chose to end his life now, denying the system the pleasure of finally breaking his spirit, as an example to others and releasing himself instead from an existence unimaginably bleak and soul-destroying.

Terry was, in a very real sense, cruelly murdered by the prison system. Like countless others before him, he simply couldn't endure any longer the dehumanisation and mental torture of captivity without end. For him, life without dignity and the hope of freedom was really no life at all.

He will be badly missed by all of us on this side of the prison wall who shared his struggle and vision of a world without prisons and the exploitative social system that creates them. We salute his memory and example.

John Bowden, HMP Perth

### Prisoners' Justice Day

Thursday 10 August

Annual event in memory of all those murdered by the prison system; this year also focusing on deaths in police custody. Organised by the Anarchist Black Cross.

London: picket Stoke Newington Police Station, 12-2pm.

Durham: meet Market Tavern, Market Place 11am to leaflet town and picket Durham prison.

Birmingham: picket Winson Green prison, 4-6pm.

Leeds: there will be a picket either at Armley gaol or the Bridewell police station. Contact Huddersfield ABC, 17-21 Chapel St, Bradford BD1 5DT.

Brighton: picket of Lewes prison. Details to be confirmed. Contact Brighton ABC c/o Prior House, 6 Tilbury Place, Carlton Hill, Brighton.

Reading/Canterbury: details yet to be confirmed at time of going to press.

## Whitemoor suicide

On 14 January 1995 a notice was put under every inmate's door informing them that a prisoner by the name of Mark Holness had hanged himself in his segregation unit cell. This notice told everybody Holness' 'parent wing' was A wing, thereby telling them he was a sex-offender, presumably in the hope that his death would not elicit sympathy or concern. This was not the case, as prisoners in the block were so appalled at the circumstances they demanded to see the police so statements could be taken from them. This request was ignored and it was only through the intervention of the Prisoners' Advice Service that statements were taken by the prison's 'police liaison officer', DC Pattison. He was not interested in what they had to say and seemed to be indulging in a damage limitation exercise. So much so, he would not take down what they said verbatim and, in the case of Sid Sivewright, told him to leave certain parts of his narrative out because he could say it at the inquest, knowing full well Sid was not going to be called to give evidence.

Holness was on a 15-minute watch because the doctor perceived him to be a suicide risk, but the night he died the seg staff were watching TV and not answering cell bells. The

inquest jury recorded a verdict of suicide with no mention of lack of care only because they never got to hear the full story. When Sid Sivewright heard what had happened at the inquest he put in a complaint about the police liaison officers and about the screws on duty the night of Holness' death. For his troubles he was set upon by the block screws who gave him a black eye and a few cuts and bruises and threw him in the strong-box. The instant the authorities learned the nature of Sivewright's allegations they put him on single exercise to minimise any influence he may have had on other inmates by informing them of what he had seen and heard on the night of Mark Holness' death. This persisted until 22 June when he wrote to the Chief Constable complaining that DC Pattison had told him to leave things out of his statement. I don't think this letter was ever posted because Sid Sivewright was sent on a 28 day lay-down to Norwich prison.

Paul Ross, HMP Whitemoor

This account is an extract from a full statement received from Paul, detailing abuses in Whitemoor over the past seven months, as well as the punitive treatment Paul himself has been subjected to since November by the authorities at Frankland, Parkhurst, Wandsworth, Whitemoor and Woodhill prisons.

## Live from death row

There are 1.5 million men and women in gaol in the USA. Three thousand are on 'death row', awaiting execution. On 1 June the Governor of Pennsylvania, Tom Ridge, signed the death warrant condemning Mumia Abu-Jamal, former Black Panther, supporter of the MOVE organisation, award-winning journalist once known as 'the voice of the voiceless', to be legally murdered on 17 August. Mumia's supporters are mobilising world-wide to try and stem the tide of US racism and halt the lynch-mob. Here NICKI JAMESON reviews Mumia's book *Live from death row*, and we reproduce a description of death row sent to FRFI by a prisoner in Huntsville, Texas.

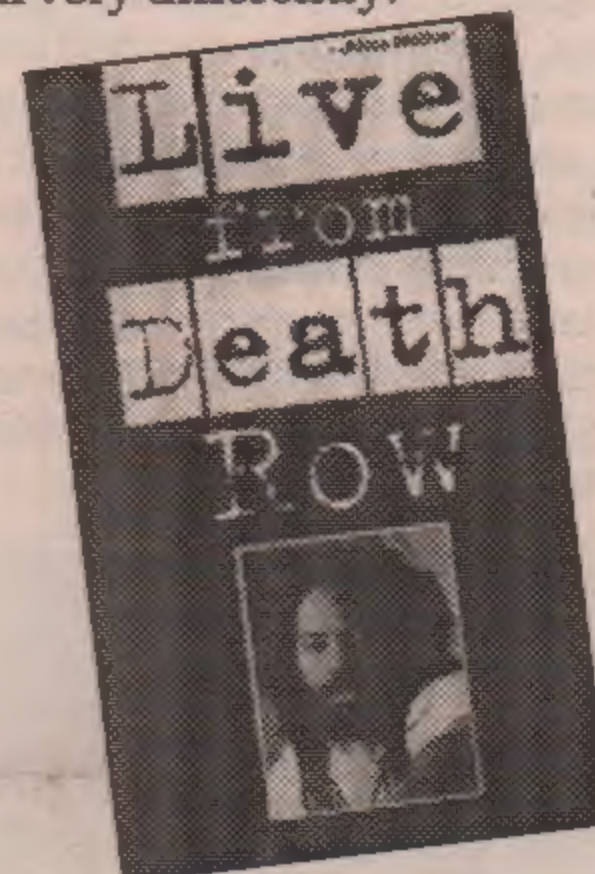
**'D**on't tell me about the valley of the shadow of death. I live there.' These are the opening lines of the Preface to *Live from death row*, a powerful book which will ensure beyond any doubt that if the state of Philadelphia does murder Mumia Abu-Jamal on 17 August 1995, neither he nor the struggles in which he has participated over the past 25 years, both in and out of gaol, will ever be forgotten.

'Unlike other prisoners, death row inmates are not "doing time". Freedom does not shine at the end of the tunnel.' Mumia Abu-Jamal takes his reader on a trip around death row; we see prisoners hooked on TV - 'an umbilical cord, a psychological connection to the world they have lost ... For many, loss of TV is too high a price to pay for any show of resistance'; we meet those who have been driven to insanity or suicide, as well as those who, in the midst of hopelessness, continue to resist, even to laugh. And we share the distress of Mumia's youngest daughter, visiting her father for the first time and realising he is behind a glass screen and she cannot touch him.

Amidst these poignant anecdotal accounts the judicial maze surrounding death row is clarified, not in legal, but in political terms. There are several references to the *McCleskey v Kemp* case, 1987, where the Court was presented with incontrovertible evidence that the race of a murder victim was a strong determining factor in whether a death penalty was returned or not. In a judgement reminiscent of Lord Denning's refusal to accept that the Birmingham Six had had their 'confessions' beaten out of them, the judge ruled that the

evidence was unacceptable because, 'taken to its logical conclusion, McCleskey throws into serious question the principles that underlie our entire criminal justice system.'

The final section of the book, 'Musings, memories and prophecies' is concerned with wider aspects of the US of the 1970s, '80s and '90s: the legacy of Malcolm X, the rise and fall of the Black Panther Party, the tragic death of Huey Newton, the beating of Rodney King, Waco, Clinton's Crime Bill, the life of today's young black population, alienated from everything but the rap music 'born of urban youth consciousness', lamented by 'some nouveau middle-class blacks' as 'the lost generation'. Mumia sees them very differently:



'This is not the lost generation. They are the children of the LA rebellion, the children of the MOVE bombing, the children of the Black Panthers, and the grandchildren of Malcolm; far from lost, they are probably the most aware generation since Nat Turner's; they are not so much lost as they are mislaid, discarded by this increasingly racist system that undermines their inherent worth.'

'They are *all* potential revolutionaries, with the historic power to transform our dull realities.'

'If they are lost, *find* them.'

The book concludes with an impressionistic account of Mumia Abu-Jamal's own political history. How he and three other teenagers shouted out 'Black power' at a George Wallace presidential election rally and were beaten by racists and the police; his time with the Panthers and the agony of the Party's destruction by agent provocateurs, surveillance, gaoling and state murder; how he worked and established a reputation as a radio-journalist; how he came into contact with, and gradually embraced, the MOVE organisation, whose determination to live in their own communities, according to their own code, and whose hatred of black career politicians, such as Jesse Jackson, was met with increasing surveillance and violence from the Philadelphia police, culminating in state-sanctioned mass murder.

Read this book and then rage. Act now to save the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal. In London the Friends of MOVE are organising a round-the-clock protest outside the US Embassy, Grosvenor Square, from 1st to 17 August. More information about this and other actions around Britain on 0181 519 9228. The Partisan Defence Committee (PDC) has been campaigning consistently to save Mumia and can be contacted on 0171 485 1396 (London) or 0141 332 0788 (Glasgow).

*Live from death row* is published in the USA by Addison-Wesley. Copies are available from PDC, BCM Box 4986, London WC1N 3XX, Price £13.

## On Death Row in Texas

Texas has one of the worst prison systems in the US and is known for its high murder rate (prisoners killing each other, as well as guards killing prisoners), brutality, sentences that last forever, corruption, lack of any rehabilitative programmes, the largest Death Row population in the US (403) and the dubious distinction of having carried out the most executions (95) since 1982.

We're allowed out of our cells for three hours a day during the week, to recreate within an enclosed area. Whenever we leave our cells, we're strip-searched by two guards (one of whom may be female); we must remove *all* our clothing, open our mouths, run our fingers through our hair, show the bottom of our feet, lift our testicles and spread our buttocks, before getting dressed again. We're then handcuffed and escorted to the day-room, visiting room, infirmary, etc. Non-compliance results in seven huge, body-armoured, riot-baton-wielding guards beating you down, bending you up like a pretzel and carrying you to the infirmary to be 'examined' before they, literally, throw you back into your cell. The administration justifies these actions as necessary for security - we are, after all, Death Row prisoners, which means 'scum' to them - but this

process was really designed to humiliate, degrade and dehumanise us and is very effective with those who've suffered from a sense of low self-esteem most of their lives. For those of us who have pride and dignity, it's merely an inconvenience and is much more dehumanising to the guards who are paid to perform such tasks.

When first coming to the Row we're allowed to keep a watch, wedding-ring, necklace with a religious medallion and a Bible, Quran or Torah, if you have any of these; everything else is taken at the front gate. The clothes we wear are white prison-made uniforms: shirts, pants, under-shorts, socks and black shoes. We get two sheets, a pillow case, a towel, a jacket and two blankets - all prison-made. They give us a razor (we are required to be clean-shaven), comb, toothbrush, soap, toilet-paper, three virtually inedible meals a day and the use of books from the prison library. Besides the 5' by 9' cell which they lock us in for 21 hours a day (24 hours at weekends, except the time to shower) that has a steel shelf for a bed, mattress, pillow, sink, toilet and a shelf, all we get from 'them' is a hard time! Everything else - tennis shoes, T-shirts, fruit juice, stamps, radios, art and craft supplies, etc - must be bought from

the prison commissary; that's no problem for guys who have family and friends to send money but guys who have nobody, have virtually nothing.

The cell block consists of three tiers, each with 20 cells, making 60 cells for 60 'hardheads' on each wing. There are eight wings to Death Row, each with its own recreation yard to keep us further divided and easier to control. The noise level is almost constant (depending only on whether you're on G-seg or J-seg, the difference being that J-seg wings have steel mesh over their bars to make them more of a cage); during the day it's mostly from TVs, located outside the cells and situated so that no matter which cell you're in, you should be able to see one, from radios, typewriters or from people talking, complaining or just ranting and raving. At night, even though the TVs are turned off (at 10.30pm on weekdays and 1.30am at weekends) it doesn't seem to get any quieter. The summers are hot and the winters are cold. Medical treatment is a joke; the attitude of the medics being that since we're sentenced to death, why should they waste their time and effort keeping us alive.

Arthur Lee Williams II, #736, Ellis I Unit, Huntsville, TX 77343, USA



# Time to sharpen our knives

## Gradualism – a counter revolutionary stratagem

**F**abius was the Roman general whose successful dilatory strategy thwarted Hannibal's invasion of Italy. In modern times, fabianism means to delay proletarian struggle whenever capitalism is temporarily vulnerable – 'not today, perhaps tomorrow' – just enough for the capitalists to recover or mount a devastating counterattack. We have lots of fabians in the US left today. In fact, most fabians pretend to be 'left'.

Gradualism is the concoction by today's fabian left that, if instead of seizing the moment, we proletarians could just be patient and wait, capitalism would somehow disappear in favour of, if not complete proletarian rule, at least a less ruthless form of capitalism. Peacefully, of course. No proof is or can ever be shown for this gradualism. Why ten years or several generations from now capitalists all of a sudden would decide to cease exploiting humanity or ruthlessly eliminating, à la Nicaragua, any and all attempts by a people to throw off their yoke. Or allow wage slaves to retain more of their rightful earnings than the barest minimum to survive and reproduce themselves. Or why, several decades from now, the rotten workers' aristocracy of industrialised nations – here in the US, the overwhelmingly white, overpaid, underworked, Amerikkkan workforce – would voluntarily forfeit their obscene privileges in favour of world peace. Or why pigs might fly too, by then. By way of some unexplained mythology, 'time will take care of things', so why fight now? Sure.

With such fallacious nonsense, fabians are quick to take the guns from our hands and deflate our righteous revolutionary rage. Convincing us to wait for a 'proper time', which, of course, never comes. At which 'proper time', presumably, *The New York Times* would announce in bold letters so all can join: 'Hear ye, hear ye, the revolution has arrived.'

Corollaries to counterrevolutionary gradualism are such nonsense as armed struggle not being feasible in the US, or open fascism not ever being possible in the US, or 'non-violent' philistinism.

Non-violence! Of course, such never refer to the brutality we suffer every day from fascist thugs, with 'real cops' rampaging proletarian neighbourhoods on prime-time TV, maybe even bombing and burning an entire black neighbourhood in Phillie on CBS! Or murdering a queer on ABC, or spraying live bullets on a women's clinic on NBC, or 'patriots' militias' bombing a federal building in OK City live on CNN. Nor to the fascist state now imprisoning close on two million Americans, or the 50,000 Nicaraguans, or 75,000 Salvadoreans, or 200,000 Guatemalans murdered since 1960 so as to force demokkracy down their throats whether they wanted it or not. Those are examples of *open, direct* fascist violence, to which must be added the *implied, indirect* but just as deadly fascist violence suffered worldwide by some 15 million children under five who each year die of malnutrition or of curable diseases – that is more victims each year than war victims in the deadliest World War II year! Or here, 'at home', by the millions of malnourished children, the millions living below poverty levels, the millions victimised yearly by TB, measles or rubella and other preventable diseases – not to mention AIDS – while capitalism destroys

ANA LUCIA GELABERT is a Cuban-American political prisoner serving a life sentence in the United States. She has waged a consistent struggle against the brutality of the Texan prison system and its attempts to stifle political expression by prisoners, often herself bearing the brunt of the prison system's savagely repressive methods. In a letter to FRFI, she writes: 'Thanks for FRFI, which I got three months after it arrived. Since mid-February I was in solitary, and since early March in total incommunication: no newspapers of any kind, no radio, no TV, no news, denied all visits. All of this is illegal (under Texas law solitaires can only last 15 days)... on 5 May I was taken off solitary but put on 'lockdown', which here in Texas means bread and water regime and 24 hours a day in a cell... I was lucky to shower once a week.' She also writes regularly on the wider theme of the barbarity of the capitalist system.

millions of tonnes of surplus, 'non-profitable' medicines and foodstuffs to keep prices high, or delays medical breakthroughs to optimise patent royalties. The millions condemned to a lifetime of illiteracy, superstition, misery as a result of bigotry. All that violence doesn't count for the gradualists, since by 'violence' they only mean whatever meagre proletarian violence we might employ to counter all-out, overpowering and deadly violence by the fascist state.

proletarian has ever achieved – the CIA-advised military quickly correcting the Arbenz or Allende mishaps. And the more communists, queers, Jews, Ukrainians, Serbs or Spaniards Hitler murdered, the more popular he became. Only when, after Stalin-grad and Leningrad, the Soviets began to set German buttocks on fire, did Germans realise that perhaps genocide wasn't all that great and Hitler saw his immense popularity decline. Not a split second earlier.

ing for Prop 187 and Texans now wanting to do the same – in short, the privileged Europink settler minority – know very damn well what they are doing. They are indeed defending their class interests. How many of their ilk have you seen working on migrant farms or garment sweatshops? And that includes the fabians in the US 'left'. We genuine revolutionaries must be clear of that fact and know our enemy well so we can win a thousand battles against them. As we certainly shall.

The fallacy of gradualism is seen more clearly because more decades of revolutionary education of the US workers' aristocracy, even a worsening economy, no matter how long it lasts, would never help agglutinate these elements around a revolutionary movement. Quite the contrary, it would make them yet more prone to join the Klan. So what is the advantage or wisdom of waiting? Giving the right-wingers time to train and organise? These rightist elements must be defeated decisively, the hard way – yes, that means violence, and the sooner the better.

Lastly, the gradualists appeal to 'Revolution is good for Peru, or Mexico – but not here.' But revolution here and now is precisely what the fascist state most fears. Thanks to widespread anger in various sectors – women, queers, Americans of all colours save Europink – imperialism's feet are too clayish today for the ruling class to take any chances: precisely the reason to seize the opportunity! From the angle of the enemy's military prowess, it makes

when their security is threatened. Or how many fleets of US attack helicopters has Mexico received lately, ostensibly to 'intercept drugs'? If the US truly wanted to 'fight drugs', the DEA would arrest every other Wall Street banker, or most anyone in Mexican president Zedillo's cabinet. Today, it doesn't much matter where we face imperialism's military might. It would be no different inside the US to elsewhere. While from our military viewpoint it sure is important to 'bring the war home' so the enemy learns quickly that 'there isn't going to be no effing sanctuaries'. The only merit I can see in the 'not in the US' argument is that it sheds some light on the characteristics of base areas here: with extensive 'white' fish and waters – workers' aristocracy areas – close to and around the 'red' fish and waters; while in the Peruvian Andes or the island of Mindanao, large bona fide 'white' areas would be rare. But really, such mingling of fish and waters is in the nature of guerilla warfare anywhere! It varies only in intensity, or in geographic distribution, not in nature.



Protesters demanding justice for the police murder of Aaron Williams in San Francisco

As to 'fascism will never happen here', it's too late, it's already happened! Amerikkka has been fascist for at least a decade and a half now, and openly so since at least last November. Even if *The New York Times* has yet to announce formally in bold letters, 'Hear ye, Amerikkka is now openly fascist'. Let's face that truth and keep our definitions clear. What is fascism? Fascism requires a workers' aristocracy enjoying, at the expense of the world's proletariat, a much higher living standard than its labour merits, and willing to do anything – war, genocide or whatever – to keep it that way. For example, Ferdinand Marcos or Alberto Fujimori are not genuine fascists: ruthless dictators, thieves, pawns of imperialism, genocidists, much more, but not fascists. Since fascism requires something neither Peru nor the Philippines has: a sizeable portion of the country's working class, whose earnings comparably much exceed their production, supporting the fascists' national and/or racial supremacy pretences, for their own advantage. Like in Italy in the 1920s or Germany in the 1930s or in the US today. Fascism is exemplified by prison guards in Amerikkka – lazy scum, barely educated and producing nothing at all, yet earning more than teachers.

In their early stages, fascisms tend to be extremely popular – Hitler came to power by elections. So did George Bush in Texas. Something no

The horrors of Guernica and Lidice, which everybody knew, did not convince decent Christian folk in Germany that fascism was wrong – the Red Army did.

For some reason I can't quite explain, I keep thinking of current events in Eastern Europe and the ex-USSR as the Battle of Stalingrad of the 1990s.



United against racism and fascism

By a remarkably and uncomfortably similar token, it is not true that 'the masses are asses' in the US. Privileged, mostly white, Amerikkans, 'Christian fundamentalists', pro-lifers, Rush Limbaugh cheer up gangs, klansmen volunteering to patrol the Mexican border – why never the Canadian border? – or to nuke the children of Havana; Californians vot-

little difference nowadays whether the war is conducted here or in Mexico, Peru, the Philippines or Antarctica. The FMLN's November 1989 offensive, in which, added to the 'usual' US special forces, elite Guatemalan troops were brought in to El Salvador to prevent the guerillas from taking over, is a prime example. Imperialists recognise no borders



Black Panthers like Huey Newton took up arms against state violence

That imperialism looks terrifying? Agreed, but when have empowered reactionaries not looked terrifying? Louis XVI, Porfirio Diaz, Nicholas II, Chiang Kai-shek, Fulgencio Batista all looked terrifying up to the day of their downfall, when each appeared as he truly was – a paper tiger. Because it's truly We The People, not the reactionaries, who are really powerful.

None of the myriad fabian dilatory excuses being genuine, the time to start revolutionary warfare is *now* and with a piercing war cry! Before the now-openly fascist state has time to regroup and solidify; as it would if We The People miss the chance to hammer its clay feet into dust now. Let our piercing war cry be: 'Death to fascism, revolution now!'

Some 80 years ago, revolutionary Ricardo Flores Magon advised Mexicans to sink a knife into the heart of anyone offering them an electoral ballot to 'institutionalise' the revolution. That unfortunately not enough Mexicans followed Ricardo's advice resulted in Zapata being murdered, Ricardo exiled and murdered, and the revolution 'institutionalised' into the PRI. Counting how many have died in Mexico since 1914 as a result of curable diseases, malnutrition or botched-up back-alley abortions – most of which a victorious revolution would have prevented – following Ricardo's advice would have saved millions of lives. Learning from history, let's get busy sharpening our knives!



## CHOOSE THE RCG

If you believe that the treachery of the opportunist British Labour and trade union movement must be challenged, then there is no alternative - **Join the RCG!**

**I would like to join/receive more information about the RCG**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_

**SUBSCRIBE  
to the best  
anti-imperialist  
newspaper in Britain  
FIGHT RACISM!  
FIGHT IMPERIALISM!**

Subscription rates:

- Britain (inc N. Ireland): £5 for 6 issues, £9.50 for 12 issues
- EC/Europe air printed paper rate: £6.50 for six issues, £12.50 for 12 issues
- EC/Europe air letter rate: £7.50 for 6 issues, £13.50 for 12 issues
- Africa, America, Middle East, South Asia air printed paper rate: £9.50 for 6 issues, £18 for 12 issues
- East Asia, Australasia, Pacific air printed paper rate: £10 for 6 issues, £19.50 for 12 issues
- Libraries and Institutions: double individual rates

Make cheques/POs payable to Larkin Publications.

Add £5 for foreign currency cheques. Overseas rates given are for printed paper reduced rate and are unsealed. If you wish your mail to be sealed please let us know and we will inform you of the extra cost. I wish to subscribe to FRFI beginning with issue

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose payment of £ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ issues at rate \_\_\_\_\_

Return this form to: FRFI, BCM Box 5909 London WC1N 3XX

## RCG COMMUNIST FORUMS

A new series of public discussions of communist politics, introduced by members of the FRFI Editorial Board, begins in September.

**Sunday 10 September  
Meltdown: the crisis of  
international finance  
Speaker: Trevor Rayne**

2pm Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1 (nearest tube: Holborn)  
*Creche available*

Future forums in London for the rest of the year will be on Sunday 8 October, Sunday 5 November and Sunday 10 December. There will also be a series of forums in Manchester. For further details contact FRFI on 0171 837 1688.

## CUBA SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

**Wednesday 26 July, 7.30pm  
Moncada anniversary  
meeting and social**

Organised by South London Cuba Solidarity Campaign. At the Old White Horse (function room), corner Loughborough Road and Brixton Road, London SW2. (Brixton/Oval tubes) £3/£2.

## LETTERS

write to FRFI BCM Box 5909 London WC1N 3XX

# Hands off Yugoslavia

Not since the Korean war, when the United States was in total control of the United Nations, was the organisation so brazenly abused to defend NATO interests as it is in the Balkan conflict today.

It is well known that the whole dismemberment of the Federative Republic of Yugoslavia was the work of the same circles which had collaborated with the Nazis during World War II. They were the notorious Croatian Ustasi who had murdered 700,000 Serbs, 400,000 Jews and 20,000 Gypsies! They were in fact some of the best accomplices of Germany, and so were many Bosnians who had served Hitler in the Waffen SS.

These people fled after the Tito revolution, and became a privileged emigré class in the US, Australia and West Germany. Their sons had waited in the wings for the death of Tito and the opportunity to seize power with the help of German and American corporations, which are after the rich mining resources in which Yugoslavia is the richest country in Europe.

Not many people are familiar with the who's who of American industrialists, so it didn't strike them that a certain Fabricio Hochschild, representing American Metal Climax and other US mining corporations which exploit copper in Chile and tin in Bolivia, base metals in Namibia etc, had been appointed United Nations representative for Yugoslavia in 1991.

Similarly, in charge of cultural affairs is Contessa Thyssen, a specialist in Croatian art and well-qualified to look into the treasures which German aristocrats had lost when Yugoslavia went socialist. The Thyssen Steel Trust, the biggest corporation in Germany, was the biggest financier of Hitler since 1926. (See August Thyssen, *Why I paid Hitler*. Thyssen spent the war years in Switzerland to keep up contact with the firm's interests in other parts of the world.)

It is typical of the capitalist press that within the three years of fighting, not a word has been published about Yugoslavia's natural resources -

tungsten, copper, molybdenum, sulphur, etc - hidden in the mountains of a country for which a million partisans had shed their lives. Yugoslavia was in fact the first country during the war which organised popular resistance in 1941, and the courage of the partisans inaugurated guerrilla warfare which later spread to Italy. Many Italians and Austrians joined the anti-fascist Yugoslavs. These features of the Second World War, which indeed helped defeat the Nazis, were not mentioned in the 'end of war' celebrations in Hyde Park.

The people of Yugoslavia will not permit their country to be annexed by the international monopolies, disguised as they are in religious masks.

GERTRUDE ELIAS  
London

We welcome readers comments and views on this letter and the article on the war in Yugoslavia which appears on page 4.

Britain knew that it could not defeat the IRA by military means, and therefore chose dialogue which involved external, but not impartial, parties such as the US and the Eire governments to diplomatically facilitate the peace process.

It is to be hoped Britain's commercial involvement in the arms trade does not blind it to the horrors of war. Having just commemorated VE day, Britain should reflect on the murderous regimes which consume arms so voraciously and recognise that a lasting peace does not come out of the barrel of a gun but through the political and diplomatic skills of men such as Kani Yilmaz.

HIKMET BOZAT,  
KURDISH POLITICAL PRISONER  
HMP Long Lartin

thousands of letters of support. Presumably he spent a lot of time reading them. We know that he maintains his innocence. We know that he is going back to the army, where it is not impossible he will be given a gun.

John Kamara maintains his innocence; he will rot in prison until he denies it, which he will never do. John is black; the Tory press will not support him. Can a few readers please do so. Write to John Kamara H10109, HMP Wakefield, 5 Love Lane, Wakefield, WF2 9AG.

ERIC ALLISON  
Manchester

## Free Kani Yilmaz

Kani Yilmaz is one of the National Liberation Front of Kurdistan's (ERNK) European representatives. He was openly and cordially invited on four previous occasions to Britain by Labour MPs. The fifth invitation was for 26 October 1994; once again the invitation was extended by Labour MPs. However, as he was on his way to address MPs, he was arrested by members of the security services. The spurious excuses given for the arrests were that it was in Britain's national interests, including security interests. Since then, Yilmaz has been

incarcerated in high security conditions at Belmarsh Prison. The German government has applied to have Yilmaz repatriated to Germany. A decision on his future was started on 4 May 1995 and is due to be concluded on 25 July 1995.

Yilmaz is an ambassador, not a terrorist. He has done nothing wrong. His only 'crime' is to try to inform the British people of what is going on in Kurdistan.

Since 15 August 1984, a war has been going on between Kurdish freedom fighters and Turkish forces. This long and bitter war has claimed the lives of innocent men, women and children. There can be no military solution: only diplomacy and politics can resolve the conflict. It is for this reason that we should appreciate the tireless efforts of Yilmaz.

## Support John Kamara

In a letter to *The Guardian* on the Clegg affair, Simon Creighton stated that 'Enormous emphasis is placed on addressing the causes of offending and so prisoners who maintain their innocence are faced with an uphill struggle to be released'.

John Kamara is in Wakefield prison (as was Clegg) in the 14th year of a life sentence for murder. He has always protested his innocence. I quote from an internal circular prepared by a Principal Officer at Wakefield: 'He [Kamara] is still protesting his innocence and... will not admit taking

part in the murder for which he was convicted.' The report continues: 'He has no hobbies and spends most of his time lying on his back,' but contradicts itself in the very next sentence, 'Most of his time is spent in contacting and receiving information from his legal representatives and MPs; spends most of his cash on photocopying and postage'. The report concludes: 'In my opinion Kamara is not suitable for release, he has done nothing since the day of his conviction to address his offence.'

We are told Private Clegg received

## I won't back down

You send me a copy of your paper every two months; would you please send them to Ackington prison as I've moved from Frankland. I must say that I'm a life sentence prisoner and have been in prison for 11 years and this is the worst gaol I've ever been in. I've done a lot of time in blocks with screws kicking the shit out of me at Wakefield and Frankland but the screws in Ackington are the worst I've ever come across. When you make an application or complaint they try to intimidate you or get bigger cons to have a go at you. But I won't back down.

I've asked for a transfer but they knocked me back. While I was down the block, having been muftied off the unit (forcibly removed by riot squad), a screw pinched my tape collection of 50s and 60s music. I put in a complaint but yet again, another knock-back. In fact, I've made 10 requests and had 10 knock-backs in this prison. You have

to be a grass to be entitled to get anything. Please publish this in your paper so in future, when I pass the paper around, other inmates might be encouraged to stand up for their rights.

A young lad was found hanged in his cell a month ago. He hanged himself at about 2pm. He wasn't found until 3.50pm. The doctor and police were not brought until 7.30pm and he was not removed from his cell until after 9pm. It was the system that killed him, as he was promised him home leave because his brother had a brain tumour. When the board sat they knocked him back for another month. He only had about seven or eight months left to serve.

Keep up the good work and fight for all our rights.

BILLY WARRENER  
HMP Ackington  
Morpeth, Northumberland

## Ravers are core of anti-CJA movement

After reluctantly buying a copy of FRFI, I was pleasantly surprised to find coverage of issues that matter to people in 1990s Great Britain. Instead of the usual stale nonsense about unions and pickets, I have found, in recent months, refreshing articles about the Criminal Justice Act, the live export and roads movements. These are the issues that matter to people in this country and these are the movements which have the potential to really challenge the state. What is more, people in Brighton are buying FRFI especially for these articles. Having bought the paper, they are then exposed to other issues, such as the Cuban blockade, which although not having the potential to build a revolutionary movement in this country, have become talking points in the pubs and community centres.

I do have certain reservations. The road protesters in this country have shown great imagination and courage in opposing roads. However, although important, the influence of the road protests on the anti-CJA movement must not be exaggerated. It is therefore wrong to describe the movement as the anti-roads, anti-CJA movement. On the other hand, the influence of the pro-roads movement has not been given enough space. It is the ravers who have provided the core of the movement. They are rightly angry about the state imposing limits on us having fun. The fact that ravers have become politicised by the CJA movement must not be exaggerated. Likewise, FRFI has not quite managed to capture the extent of community action at places like Shoreham and Brightlingsea, nor has it managed to convey the extent of police brutality. Mass community resistance is so important, it cannot be overemphasised.

Despite this, people actually look forward to FRFI rather than trying to avoid the 'paper sellers' in the SWP and Militant. Despite much political disagreement in the anti-CJA movement, FRFI is at least provoking an amount of interesting debate.

ANDY  
Brighton

## MEETINGS, PICKETS AND PROTESTS

### Free Kani Yilmaz and other Kurdish political prisoners

Public meeting Sunday 31 July 2.30pm, Kurdish Workers Association, 11 Portland Road, London N4. Speakers include: Kani Yilmaz's solicitor, Bridget Irving and John Austin-Walker MP.

### Defend the NHS - national demonstration

Saturday 29 July, 11.30am, Embankment, London. March to rally in Hyde Park.

### Public meeting: No to Immigration raids! No more deaths in police custody!

Speakers include the families of Joseph Nnalue, Joy Gardner and Brian Douglas. Monday 31 July, 7pm, St Anselm's Hall, Kennington Road (corner Sancroft Road), London SE11. (tubes: Lambeth North, Kennington) Organised by the Joseph Nnalue Family Support Group

## Rock around the Blockade Events

### MANCHESTER

5 August

### STREET MEETING

11am-1pm, Market St,

### SOCIAL

7.30pm, Beer House, Rochdale Road, Entrance by donation.

Saturday 1 October

### SPONSORED WALK

Manchester will also be organising stalls at Freshers Fairs in late September, a video showing and a social event, and building for the 14 October national demonstration.

For details of these and other events in Manchester and Blackburn, contact: Dept 4, 1 Newton Street, Manchester M1.

### LONDON

Saturday 5 August

### PETITIONING AGAINST THE US BLOCKADE

11.30am-2.30pm, Covent Garden (meet outside Rock Garden)

Saturday 12 August

### PLANNING MEETING

3pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square (Holborn tube). All welcome.

Saturday 19 August

### STALL AND PETITIONING IN LEWISHAM

11.30am-2.30pm.

Meet by Lewisham market.

Bank Holiday Weekend 26-28 August. We are organising a Rock around the Blockade stall at the Reading Festival. Contact the campaign if you can help.

Saturday 9 September

### STREET MEETING

Oxford Circus 12 noon.

Saturday 23 September

### SPONSORED LONDON-BRIGHTON BIKE RIDE

Entry forms and details available from the campaign address below.

Saturday 14 October

### NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION HANDS OFF CUBA! END THE US BLOCKADE

Join the Rock around the Blockade contingent and demand support for the Cuban revolution. Assemble 12 noon, Marble Arch, London

For further details of Rock around the Blockade, contact the campaign c/o FRFI, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX or tel 0171 837 1688

## FRFI fund drive

- have you contributed yet?

**The FRFI Fund Drive has raised £1,300 to date - a big thank you for the generosity of all our readers who have contributed so far.**

But we're still a long way off from our target of £5,000, urgently needed to sustain our newspaper and our political work. In particular, we need to renew our computer equipment which is now obsolete, as well as build up funds for future publications.

So, if you haven't yet contributed please send us whatever you can afford to help sustain the only anti-imperialist newspaper in Britain that brings you regular coverage of political economy, international events, the struggle against racism and fascism, against the Criminal Justice Act, against the brutality of the prison system - and that consistently exposes the Labour Party as the representative of the ruling class.

**Get your cheque in the post today!**

I enclose £ \_\_\_\_\_ to the FRFI Fund Drive (cheques/POs payable to Larkin Publications)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to FRFI, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX



# FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

The militant campaign spearheaded by Greenpeace against the dumping of the Brent Spar oil platform on the North Sea seabed forced Shell into a humiliating climbdown. The British government, which had backed Shell to the hilt, was left high and dry by the giant multinational's U-turn. It furiously attacked Shell. Meanwhile, loud voices were raised about the 'dangers' to democracy of this victory for direct action. As usual in this society, democracy by definition excludes the popular will. But for once that popular will – to prevent even more pollution of the seas – won out. The Greenpeace activists who occupied the Brent Spar risked life and limb to help win this victory. Below, we reprint an edited account by **AL BAKER**, one of those aboard the Brent Spar. The full version was first published in *Weekly SchNEWS* newsletter of Justice?, Brighton's campaign against the Criminal Justice Act, c/o On the Fiddle, PO Box 2600, Brighton BN2 2DX.

# Shell shock

The first time I boarded the Brent Spar was in the last of three weeks of the initial occupation. Eighteen people were on the rig, covered in dirt and washing in sea water. It was carpeted though, we had a top French chef, sleeping bunks, and the place was jam-packed with tools and £100,000 worth of diving gear. That night Shell brought a floated rig, called a Staydive, a hundred miles across the sea. It arrived at dark and looked like a small city covered in lights. It parked just 20ft away for two days. Then they raised a two tonne basket full of Shell security on a crane from the Staydive to try and land on the edge of the deck. The Staydive is run by computer with wires leading down to the sea bed to stop it moving – accurate to two inches! We knew if we grabbed the wires and took off it'd follow. They started freaking and had to make their move. They could, at best, set

with the *Moby Dick* support ship and they told me to get down because it 'would not look good for the campaign'. In other words, they thought I would die of exposure and a dead activist wouldn't look good. In the morning they brought on the skipper who asked me to come down. When I'd woken I felt pretty stiff and cold and was worried about exposure so I came down.

As soon as we left, Shell came straight in and stripped the Spar, making it inhospitable, and rigged it up to two tugs to drag it off to its deep sea death. I wanted to get back on... so we chartered a Dutch ship and followed the Spar for two or three days hatching plots of how we were going to re-occupy the rig. They were keeping a very close eye on us – a chopper above, another ship behind and the two tugs either side of the Spar. Then they turned on the water cannons.

Shell reckoned it was a fire drill – if it was, it was a 24hrs a day, seven

help us in this tiny chopper, then the cannons started again. We made it look like we'd attempt to occupy the Spar from the water as a decoy for the cannons and it worked.

There were three of us – Harold, Eric and me crouched in this little chopper and we went for it. We flung the door open 50ft above the rig and the cannons were aiming straight at us. We were dodging rivers in the sky so we were forced to return to the Dutch ship... We took off again – me, Eric, an engineer and our lunatic German pilot – and the guy just flew us straight in there. Suddenly we were above the rig – the engineer had a freak-out and tried to push me out so I jumped and Eric jumped hitting me on the way down and fucked his feet up.

So there we were dazed on the deck getting hosed down by the cannons and shouting 'YIPPEE!' We couldn't believe it! We went under the heli-deck but Eric couldn't walk.

By this time Shell had three tugs with two cannons on each. Our chopper tried to drop supplies but got hit so the supplies came tumbling down – BOOM! – and creamed everything!

I got hit twice by the cannons and whanged against a wall with salt water up my nose and under my eyelids. I legged it for cover. They were trying to kill us – but I was full of adrenaline and we had stuff to do.

I'd got Eric comfy in a lovely room – then I opened a supply barrel and it spilled and smashed up the room with baked beans and squashed gunge creating this big sort of soup.

They'd put razor wire all over the Spar. I cut loads of it off and made a nest on the Heli-pad to stop them landing. It looked good and it felt good to be doing something. I got hit twice again and me and this big roll of razor wire slipped across the deck. I was saved by the wire.

We knew they could blow us out if they knew which room we were in. Wires of plastic explosives were all around – and we didn't have the button. It was all radio controlled. They'd tried to kill me with the cannons, would they think twice about blowing us up? It was hard to think rationally. They could have pressed the button and claimed we had killed ourselves by tampering with the explosives – no-one would know. Should I cut the wires or not?

I called through the Dutch ship. 'I'm going to cut the wires – get me an explosives expert!' I wasn't asking them, I was telling them. Shell believed VHF communications were all we had and were monitoring them but this call was private using a crappy CB! We made like we were hi-tech used the codeword 'microwave' when we wanted to use the CB.

Greenpeace made some enquiries and the advice came back: 'You are possibly safe!' I cut the wires at strategic points. Nothing happened. It was a great relief. I covered the clumps of wires so it didn't look like I'd done anything.

We told the Dutch ship over the VHF we were four decks down and you could see the cannons lowering to fire. We were, of course, much higher. Jon Castle warned Shell they'd kill us and they actually eased off a bit.

At one point I got a hit of hydrogen sulphide – I legged it. It kills you. (There had been three fatalities among former workers on the Spar.) The gas was very worrying. The two of us had been alone on the Spar for three days. We went to sleep.

By 10am we heard that the SAS and Shell had two choppers lifting off from Stornaway and they'd be here in one hour. We were getting tip-offs from everyone – including Shell employees. I thought that's it. We made a half-hearted attempt to barricade ourselves in, and had a last fag and cup of coffee. We all thought by now it'd be a relief to get off. I was so tired I fell asleep.

I woke to Eric screaming his head off in Dutch. I thought that's it – they're here. I called the ship. They said: 'Shell have done a U-turn – it's all over'. I called again – same message. I called a third time not able to believe what they were saying. We climbed up on deck and saw that the trailing ships had fallen behind. Then I watched as the tugs started turning slowly round and the biggest rainbow I'd ever seen arced across the sky – I kept pinching myself. We'd saved one banner SAVE OUR SEAS which we'd been sleeping on and I fetched it. I stood on the deck in a state of shock holding a flare, my face agog, going 'Wow!'

They came and picked our stuff up. I wanted to get back to the ship so I absconded down myself – they never got me off. I came down.

We got to Shetland and the press flocked wanting to laud us on this hero trip. It was really difficult. I just said we have shined a light and said 'Look, this is happening'. It was the customer boycott which did the damage.

The success is a little beacon of light – we don't have to get pushed around by these people. We took on the world's biggest multi-national and they just fell over. I didn't realise the support we were getting. I thought we were a couple of idiots who would get blown up. It's a lot easier to do these things if everyone's behind you. We've got a lot of power – perhaps more than we ever realised.



Greenpeace members occupied a Shell oil refinery in Luxembourg as part of Europe-wide activities against Shell's dumping strategy

them down on the edge. The ten guys in the box were screaming and shouting – we turned the box round so the gate was facing the sea and pushed them out! I got a spotlight in the crane-drivers face – strong lights are great on actions... In the end they just managed to dump it and we all legged it. The skipper, Jon Castle, was welded in eight decks down – below sea-level – and had welded each door on each deck shut behind him. Some were welded up in the communications room – we had satellite phones – and others were chained up. I'd instinctively run up this crane, locked the door at the top of the ladder and watched the madness below. I was up there 14hrs in the rain – they thought they could force me down. I was still in contact

days a week fire drill – shooting water at us 60 tonnes a second. Then they tried serving us with an injunction. They said they'd lower a guy down to read this great wad of paper to us. We told them it was too dangerous so they produced this bloody great megaphone and started shouting the words. So we hit the ship's horn! After five minutes of mouthing words lost in the siren he stopped. The poor guy was hoarse. Then they dropped someone on to the ship following us and launched a boat to try and land the injunction papers which were wrapped in polythene. So we said: 'Right lads, time to clean the decks' and got out the fire hoses! The papers landed and zipped straight off with the jets.

Then this German pilot arrived to